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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2024-25)**

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF POSTS)**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2024-25)**

SECOND REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December 2024/ Agrahayana 1946 (Saka)

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(DEPARTMENT OF POSTS)**

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(2024-25)**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.12.2024

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.12.2024



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

December 2024/ Agrahayana 1946 (Saka)

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**Composition of the Standing Committee on Communications and
Information Technology (2024-25)**

Dr. Nishikant Dubey - Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Shri C.N. Annadurai
3. Shri Anil Baluni
4. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
5. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
6. Shri Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer
7. Shri Sanjay Haribhau Jadhav
8. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
9. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
10. Smt. Poonamben Hematbhai Maadam
11. Ms. Mahua Moitra
12. Shri G. Kumar Naik
13. Shri Shafi Parambil
14. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
15. Ms. Kangna Ranaut
16. Shri Radheshyam Rathiya
17. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
18. Shri Arun Kumar Sagar
19. Shri Devesh Shakya
20. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma
21. Shri Rajesh Verma

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri Saket Gokhale*
23. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
24. Shri Ilaiyaraaja
25. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
26. Dr. Sasmit Patra
27. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
28. Shri S. Niranjan Reddy
29. Shri Kartikeya Sharma
30. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
31. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

Secretariat

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. Shri Y. M. Kandpal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Rinky Singh | - | Executive Officer |

Committee constituted w.e.f. 26th September, 2024 vide Para No.833 of Bulletin Part-II dated 26th September, 2024.

* Shri Saket Gokhale has been nominated vide Para No. 853 of Bulletin Part –II dated 03rd October, 2024.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Information Technology (2024-25), having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Second Report on Demands for Grants (2024-25) of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

2. The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2024-25) was constituted on 26th September, 2024. One of the functions of the Standing Committee, as laid down in Rule 331E of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, is to consider the Demands for Grants of the Ministry concerned and make a Report on the same to the Houses.

3. The Committee considered the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) for the year 2024-25 which were laid on the Table of the House on 31st July, 2024. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) on 16th October, 2024.

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on 16th December, 2024.

5. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) for appearing before the Committee and furnishing the information that the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the Demands for Grants.

6. The Committee would also like to place on record their appreciation for the assistance rendered to them by the officials of the Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

7. For facility of reference and convenience, Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in Part-II of the Report.

New Delhi;
16 December, 2024
25 Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

NISHIKANT DUBEY,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Communications and Information Technology.

REPORT

PART - I

I. Introduction

The Department of Posts, under the Ministry of Communications with a network of 1,64,972 Post Offices makes it the largest Postal network in the world. The origin of this modern Postal network can be traced back to the year 1727, when the first Post Office was set up in Kolkata. Subsequently, General Post Offices (GPOs) were set up in the then three Presidency towns of Kolkata in 1774, Chennai in 1786 and Mumbai in 1793. The Indian Post Office Act of 1837 was enacted to bring out uniformity in Postal operations. This Act was followed by a more comprehensive Indian Post Office Act of 1854 which laid the foundation of modern-day Postal system in the country. The Indian Post Office Act of 1898 further strengthened the Postal system in the country. On 24th December 2023, the Post Office Act, 2023 has been notified after receiving the assent of the President of India. Thus, the Post Office Act, 2023 (43 of 2023) (Act) which has come into force w.e.f. 18th June, 2024, has repealed the Indian Post Office Act, 1898.

2. Post Offices in the country are categorized into Head Post Office, Sub Post Office and Branch Post Office. Branch Post Offices are mostly located in rural areas and are manned by Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS). The Sub Post Offices are Departmental Offices located in both rural and urban areas. Head Post Offices are located in important towns and cities mostly at district levels.

3. The Postal network of the country is divided into 23 Circles for administrative convenience. Circles are generally co-terminus with a State with some exceptions such as Gujarat Circle (which also administers the Union Territory of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli), Kerala Circle (which includes the Union Territory of Lakshadweep), Maharashtra Circle (which has within its jurisdiction the State of Goa), North East Circle (which comprises six North Eastern States - Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura), Punjab Circle (which also administers the Union Territory of Chandigarh), Tamil Nadu Circle (which also administers the Union Territory of Puducherry), West Bengal Circle (which also administers the State of Sikkim and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands) and Jammu & Kashmir Circle (which also administers the Union Territory of Ladakh). Apart from the 23 Circles, Army Postal Service (APS) takes care of postal service needs of the Armed Forces. It functions under the administrative control of Ministry of Defence.

4. As per provisions under Rule 11 (B) of Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, Department of Posts is mandated with:-

- (i) Execution of works, including purchase of land debitable to the Capital Budget pertaining to the Department of Posts.
- (ii) Posts, including Post Office Savings Banks (Administration), Post Office Certificate (Administration), Post Office Life Insurance Fund (Administration), printing of public postage stamps/commemorative stamps including postal stationery, premium postal products and any agency function.
- (iiA). Matters related to India Post Payments Bank.
- (iii) International cooperation in matters connected with postal communications, including matters relating to all international bodies dealing with postal communications such as Universal Postal Union, Asia Pacific Postal Union (APU), Commonwealth Postal Union.
- (iv) Matters relating to introduction, development and maintenance of all services by the Post Office including those based on cable, radio and satellite communications channels:
Provided that these matters do not amount to broadcasting, narrowcasting, cable and radio networking services and are also not governed by the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the rules made thereunder, and not exclusively allotted to any other Department.
- (v) Promotion of feasibility survey, research and development in the field of activities allotted to the Department.
- (vi) Matters relating to administration of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 and rules made thereunder as well as other laws or enactments having a bearing on postal activities, not specifically allotted to any other Department.

5. While the core activity of the Department is processing, transmission and delivery of mail and money remittances across the country, there are various other services undertaken by the Department for more than a century, which include banking and insurance services. Ever since the promulgation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Department has also undertaken the disbursement of the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under various social security schemes launched by the Central and State Governments, even in remote, rural and inaccessible areas in the country. To meet the challenges of the new digital environment, the Department is continuously upgrading its technology and diversifying into new areas. IT Modernization Project is currently being implemented in the Department with focus on improving operational efficiency of the network.

II. Implementation status of recommendations of the Committee contained in the 44th Report on Demands for Grants (2023-24)

6. The Forty-fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology on the 'Demands for Grants' (2023-24) relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) was presented to the Lok Sabha/laid in the Rajya Sabha on 21 March, 2023. Under Rule 34(1) of 'Rules of Procedure of Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs)', the Ministry/Department concerned is required to furnish a statement showing the action taken by them on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee within three months from the date of the presentation of the Report. Accordingly, the Action Taken Notes by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in Forty-fourth Report on DFG (2023-24) were submitted by the Ministry and the Fifty-first Action Taken Report was presented to the Lok Sabha/laid in Rajya Sabha by the Committee on 10th August, 2023. Out of 11 Recommendations contained in the 44th Report, 8 Recommendations were accepted by the Government, replies to 01 Recommendation had not been accepted by the Committee and replies to 02 Recommendations had been found to be of interim nature on which final replies were sought from the Ministry. The final Action Taken Statement on the Recommendations contained in the Fifty-first Report was laid in the Parliament on 11th December, 2023.

III. Budget Analysis and Overview of Demands for Grants for 2024-25

7. The Department of Posts presented the Demands for Grants for the year 2024-25, under Demand No. 12, to the Parliament on 31st July, 2024. The Revenue and Capital Expenditure envisaged for 2024-25 under the Voted and Charged sections is as under:-

	Rs. in Crore		
	Revenue	Capital	Total
Charged	2.00	0	2.00
Voted	37652.64	1262.6000	38915.24
Total	37654.64	1262.6000	38917.24

8. Financial Position [Budget Estimate (BE), Revised Estimate (RE) and Actual Expenditure (AE)] of the Department of Posts since the year 2019-20 along with the brief Summary of the Demands for Grants 2024-25 are as indicated below:-

Particulars	Rs. in Crore																
	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	Proposed	BE
	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25	2024-25
Revenue Section																	
Gross Expenditure	30412.00	31715.88	29139.74	34057.22	32239.17	29261.46	34263.18	32247.88	30924.06	35507.27	35592.83	32595.57	39156.43	35416.54	35645.52	41800.74	37654.64
Deduct-Recoveries	857.35	857.35	768.4	953.00	820.00	933.87	935.00	815.00	1202.63	850.00	1200.00	1139.24	1300.00	1200.00	1255.88	1200.00	1300
Net Expenditure	29554.65	30858.53	28371.34	33104.22	31419.17	28327.59	33328.18	31432.88	29721.43	34657.27	34392.83	31456.33	37856.43	34216.54	34389.64	40600.74	36354.64
Postal Receipts	19203.29	19203.29	13558.2	18710.05	12330.05	10632.5	17710.05	13398.34	10860.80	14725.87	12230.41	10917.89	13439.38	11408.04	11321.35	12483.43	12238.77

Deficit	10351.36	11655.24	14813.14	14394.17	19089.12	17695.09	15618.13	18034.54	18860.63	19931.4	22162.42	20538.44	24417.05	22808.5	23068.29	28117.31	24115.87
Capital Section																	
Gross Expenditure	947.74	742.98	730.56	1131.21	861.71	897.41	910.09	932.33	885.55	886.62	1494.017	1476.67	1396.95	1580.7	1386.89	1863.90	1262.6
Deduct-Recoveries																	
Net Expenditure	947.74	742.98	730.56	1131.21	861.71	897.41	910.09	932.33	885.55	886.62	1494.017	1476.67	1396.95	1580.7	1386.89	1863.90	1262.6

9. When asked about the status of expenditure incurred so far during the year 2024-25, the Secretary, during evidence submitted as under:-

“One question was asked, how is our expenditure this year? Definitely, it is not 50 per cent. But we have got above 30 per cent. जब वोट ऑन एकाउंट होता है, तो थोड़ा स्लो हो जाता है। मैं स्कीम्स की बात कर रही हूँ, मेन एक्सपेंडिचर में प्रोक्योरमेंट या बिल्डिंग कंस्ट्रक्शन है। इसमें थोड़ा डिले होता है, लेकिन 30 सितम्बर की तारीख तक हमारी 30 परसेंट बुकिंग है। हम पूरी तरह से एश्योर हैं कि हमारा कमिटेड एक्सपेंडिचर है और हम दिसम्बर तक काफी कैच-अप कर लेंगे। उसके बाद स्पीड ठीक हो जाएगी। अभी यह थोड़ा स्लो है, लेकिन 30 परसेंट बुकिंग है”।

IV. REVENUE SECTION

i. Gross Expenditure

10. The details of the Gross Expenditure (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the last five years and the BE for the year 2024-25 as furnished by the Department are:-

	Rs. in Crore					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Proposed	33628.97	36730.61	37707.64	39753.40	40859.18	41800.74
BE	30412.00	34057.22	34263.18	35507.27	39156.43	37654.64
RE	31715.88	32239.17	32247.88	35592.83	35416.54	NA
Actuals	29139.74	29261.46	30924.06	32595.57	35645.52	NA

11. The Gross Expenditure of the Department included pensions, salaries, wages, allowances and other administrative expenses like Office Expenses, Professional Services, Domestic Travel Expenditure, Minor Works, Repairs and Maintenance, Medical, etc. Further, Ministry of Finance had decreased the Gross Expenditure budget from Rs. 39156.43 Crore in BE 2023-24 to Rs. 35416.54 Crore in RE 2023-24 in view of reduction in Salary, Allowances and Pensions components that were estimated at BE stage.

12. As regards the reasons for variation between BE 2023-24 and BE 2024-25, the Department submitted as under:-

“There has been a decrease in the BE 2024-25 allotment to the Department in comparison to BE 2023-24. This decrease is primarily due to a decrease in the allocation for the components of Salaries, Allowances and Pensionary Charges in BE 2024-25. These three items constitute 89.30% of the Department’s expenditure”.

13. When asked about the items in which there has been an increasing or decreasing trend of expenditure during the last three years and major obstacles being faced to control the Gross Expenditure, the Department replied:-

“The decreasing trends in gross expenditure are indicative of decrease in Salaries & Pensionary charges with respect to BE 2023-24 & BE 2024-25. During the last three years Salaries & Pensionary Charges have shown a decreasing trend. Allowances have shown an increasing trend from BE 2022-23 to BE 2024-25. Wages and Establishment expenditure have also shown an increasing trend from BE 2022-23 to BE 2024-25 at an average of 11.5% and 16.65% respectively. Committed liabilities such as Salaries, Allowances and Pensionary charges constitute 89.30% of the Department’s total Gross Expenditure, so these can not be reduced”.

14. Elaborating on the ways to reduce the expenditure, the Secretary, while deposing before the Committee, submitted as under:-

“आपने यह भी पूछा था कि खर्च कम करने के लिए हम क्या करेंगे। मैं बताना चाहूंगी कि इसके लिए हम एक मेजर एक्सरसाइज़ कर रहे हैं, हम सारे पोस्ट ऑफिसेज का नेटवर्क स्टडी कर रहे हैं, इनके रेशनलाइजेशन के लिए, ताकि जहाँ ज्यादा जरूरत है, जहाँ हमें बिज़नेस मिल सकती है, वहाँ हम डाकखाने स्थानांतरित कर सकते हैं। अगर कोई डाकखाना पास में है, तो बिना पब्लिक को तकलीफ दिए हम स्थानांतरित भी कर सकते हैं। अननेसेसरिली कई स्थानों पर डाकघर खुल जाते हैं, जहाँ से बिज़नेस नहीं आ रही होती है, तो किराया बचाने के लिए हम पोस्ट ऑफिसेज को मर्ज भी कर सकते हैं। दूसरा, बिजली की जो नॉर्मल कटौतियाँ करेंगे, इसके साथ ही हम सोलर की ओर भी पुश करना चाहते हैं, जो अभी शुरू होना है। इनिशियल कैपिटल एक्सपेंडिचर के बाद उसमें खर्च कम होंगे और उम्मीद है कि सोलर ऊर्जा की अच्छी व्यवस्था होगी, तो इससे ग्रिड में भी बिजली जाएगी। अभी हमने उसके लिए योजना नहीं बनाई है, लेकिन हम उसके लिए योजना बनाना चाहते हैं। हमारे सैलरीज और एलाउंसंसेज के खर्च तो रहेंगे ही, हमें यह करना है कि हर व्यक्ति ज्यादा प्रोडक्टिविटी दिखाए, इससे रेवेन्यू आएगी। हमें लोगों को तो नहीं हटाना है, हमें उनकी जरूरत है, लेकिन वे सारा दिन क्या काम कर रहे हैं, नये सॉफ्टवेयर में प्रत्येक की मैपिंग आएगी, जिससे हमें पता चलेगा कि यह ऑफिस प्रॉफिट सेंटर है या नहीं। मंत्री जी ने भी इसके लिए कहा है। इसलिए हम नये सिस्टम के लिए बहुत ही डिटेल में काम करने जा रहे हैं ताकि प्रत्येक ऑफिस में एक-एक व्यक्ति की मैपिंग हो पाए। इसके लिए हमारी पूरी डिटेल में कोशिश है, देखिए हम कितना अच्छा कर पाते हैं”।

ii. Revenue Receipts

15. The details of the revenue receipts (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for last five years and the BE for the year 2024-25 submitted by the Department are as under:-

	Rs. in Crore					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Proposed	18624.78	19283.29	14830.05	15000.00	16379	12483.43
BE	19203.29	18710.05	17710.05	14725.87	13439.38	12238.77
RE	19203.29	12330.05	13398.34	12230.41	11408.04	NA
Actuals	13558.20	10632.50	10860.80	10917.89	11321.35	NA

16. According to the Department, the estimated Revenue in RE 2023-24 was Rs.11408.04 Crore against the Budget Estimate of Rs. 13439.38 Crore on account of its Postal Operations as well as Remunerations on Savings Bank Business during the year 2023-24. The revenue so estimated shows an increase of 4.48% over the actual Revenue of Rs. 10917.89 Crore for the previous Year (2022-23). Further, the estimated revenue in BE 2024-25 is Rs. 12238.77 Crore.

17. When the Committee desired to know the items/heads on which the Department received revenue receipts, the Department of Posts replied that revenue is generated through various items/heads, including:

- I. Postal Services:** Revenue from Speed Post (Documents), Speed Post (Parcel), International Parcel, Business Parcel, Postage Realised in Cash through Mass Mailing Services, Sale of Postage Stamps, Remotely Managed Franking Machines.
- II. Agency Services:** Remuneration received from Ministry of Finance for Small Savings Schemes, and Cash Certificates.
- III. Other Citizen Centric services** such as: Aadhaar enrollment and updation Centres, Passport Seva Kendras and Common service centres.

During the year 2023-24, the Department achieved revenue of Rs. 11,321.22 Crore against target of Rs. 11,408.04 Crore, which is more than 99% of the target”.

18. When queried about the focus areas of the Department to increase revenue receipts during the 2024-25, the Department stated that the major initiatives taken during the year were:-

“Parcels and E-Commerce:

- i. Rationalization of value-added services relating to parcel products of the Department: Charges for Cash on Delivery and Insurance service of the Department have been reduced keeping in view the industry trends. Minimum business volumes for National Account Facility have also been reduced to enable start-ups to use this facility.
- ii. Overall restructuring of parcel products into air and surface parcel in line with industry offerings is underway so as to devise only two parcel offerings - air and surface parcel, and eliminate duplicate offerings.
- iii. To enhance business through e-post office, a new e-post office portal is proposed in IT 2.0, which is under development. This will have a user friendly interface and expected to increase business through the portal.

Financial Services:

- i. The Department, with its new technology initiatives like ATM, E-Banking, M-Banking, NEFT, CBS-GL integration, CBS-CTS integration, e-PAN validation, mobile number validation etc has improved the quality and delivery of service. In order to make the

services available at the finger tips of the customers at any time of the day or night, account opening & closure facility for POSB accounts has been provided through internet banking facility.

- ii. To increase revenue in Financial Services, Department organises special campaigns, melas and promotional camps to encourage people for investment in small savings schemes.

Other Services

- i. The Department also reviews its services and products keeping in view the changing market scenario, customer needs, industry benchmarks etc. and takes necessary steps/action to modify service features to improve the postal services to increase the revenue receipts of the Department.
- ii. New MoU has been signed with Khadi Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for physical verification of their Units under PM Employment Generation Programme which will bring additional revenue to the Department using the existing resources.
- iii. Technology integration and infrastructure upgradation is also being done in a systematic manner to increase the efficiency and reduce the cost of operations, thereby decreasing the revenue deficit.

19. Elaborating on the measures being taken to increase the revenue receipts during 2024-25, the Department submitted as under:-

- (i) Around 1.8 lakh mobile phones are being used by delivery staff for real time updation of delivery status of Speed Post, Registered Post, Money Orders etc. through postman mobile app.
- (ii) Application Programme Interface (API) Integration facility has been introduced for seamless exchange of booking and delivery data with customers.
- (iii) In order to improve delivery time and visibility, performance of Speed Post and other accountable articles is regularly monitored through a well-defined set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at HQ as well as Circle/Division levels.
- (iv) Corporate Customer Specific MIS has been introduced wherein customers can access booking and delivery MIS reports through login id and password.
- (v) 24x7 CRM for bulk customers has been put in place to upload complaints in bulk and monitor the status on CRM.
- (vi) In order to provide enhanced after-sales service, Single Point of Contacts have been designated for corporate customers having monthly business of Rs.10 lakh and above in all the Postal Circles.
- (vii) Registration process of bulk customer under BNPL and NAF with DoP has been revised wherein Time limit of 2 days and 7 days has been prescribed for customer registration under Book Now Pay Later (BNPL) and National Account Facility, respectively.
- (viii) Department is strengthening the marketing of the Speed Post / Registered letter services to onboard new customers to improve the Speed Post /Registered letter revenue.
- (ix) New age booking avenues such as Booking Kiosks & online booking of postal articles are also being introduced to attract new customers.

- (x) Revamped franchisee scheme has been introduced with the revised commission structure to increase the revenue of various postal products including Speed Post & Registered Post.

iii. Revenue Deficit

20. According to the Department, the revenue deficit (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the last five years and the BE for the year 2024-25 are as under:-

	Rs. in Crore					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Proposed	14146.84	16494.32	21942.59	23903.41	29584.73	28117.31
BE	10351.36	14394.17	15618.13	19931.4	24417.05	24115.87
RE	11655.24	19089.12	18034.54	22162.42	22808.5	NA
Actuals	14813.14	17695.09	18860.63	20538.44	23068.29	NA

21. When asked about the items/heads on which the Department had incurred revenue deficit and the major obstacles faced by the Department to control revenue deficit during 2023-24, the reply of the Department was as under:-

“The items/heads on which the Department incurred maximum expenditure are: salaries, allowances and pension. Pension constitutes 33.35 % of the total revenue expenditure of the Department. Whereas salary and allowances constitute 24.02% and 32.01% respectively. These three components are committed liabilities of the Government. The remaining 11 % expenditure is related to recurring establishment costs”.

22. To a pointed query regarding the steps/initiatives proposed to contain the Revenue Deficit in the year 2024-25, the Department has reiterated their reply that was given with respect to measures for increasing the revenue receipts. (Ref Paras No.18 and 19).

V. CAPITAL SECTION

(i) GROSS EXPENDITURE

23. The details of the Gross Expenditure (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for last five years and the BE for the year 2024-25 are as under:-

	Rs. in Crore					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Proposed	1315.69	1450.54	1566.10	1861.34	1514.11	1035.61
BE	947.74	1131.21	910.09	886.62	1396.95	1262.60
RE	742.98	861.71	932.33	1494.01	1580.07	NA
Actuals	730.56	897.41	885.55	1476.67	1386.89	NA

24. When asked about the items on which the Department incurred Capital Expenditure and whether there had been any shortfall in utilization of funds during 2023-24, the Department submitted as under:-

Rs. in Crore				
Sl. No.	Plan Scheme/Activity	RE 2023-24	Exp till March 2024	Percentage Expenditure March w.r.t RE 2023-24
1.	Mail Operations	84.22	76.9	91.30%
2.	Estates Management	118.56	117.39	99.01%
3.	India Post Payments Bank	250	250	100.00%
4.	IT Induction and Modernization 2.0	933.99	919.6	98.46%

The Department's capital expenditure is focussed on several key areas, including Mail Operations, Estates Management, India Post Payments Bank, and the IT Induction & Modernization 2.0 initiative. Notably, over 90% of the allocated funds for the final grants of 2023-24 were effectively utilized, indicating a strong commitment to project implementation and no shortfall in fund utilization.

25. Regarding plans to completely utilize the Capital Outlay during 2024-25, the Department stated as under:-

“The monitoring mechanism for review of physical and financial targets under schemes has been further strengthened. A well placed mechanism of senior officer’s meeting with programme divisions within the Postal Directorate and meeting with various Postal Circle Heads implementing the schemes has been set up. These meetings are being held under chairpersonship of Secretary (Posts). Dashboard meetings at the level of HMoC are also being regularly held. These steps will help the Department to optimally utilise not only the funds under capital head, but also under revenue heads”.

26. While depositing before the Committee, the representatives of the Department were asked about the detailed action plan to reduce expenditure so as to make the Department sustainable and financially independent. To this, the representative of the Department responded as under:-

“The first question was on the excess that has been incurred on the revenue gross expenditure and the second question was as to why there was a surrender in the capital section in 2023-24. So, I just go back to our B.E. proposals of 2023-24 which we had asked from the Ministry of Finance. There are two major components – salaries and allowances. हमने सैलरीज में 11,760 करोड़ रुपए मांगे थे, लेकिन हमें R.E. में सिर्फ 8,743 करोड़ रुपए दिए गए। एलॉएंसजेज में हमने 10,705 करोड़ रुपए मांगे थे and we were given Rs. 10,650 crore. हमने कितना खर्च किया, अब हम उस पर आते हैं। These are the actual figures of 2023-24. Rs. 9,176.9 crore had been spent in salaries, and in allowances we spent Rs. 11,080 crore. हमें इन दोनों मेजर हेड्स में कम पैसे दिए गए थे at the R.E. stage. The Department has to pay salary

and allowance in full. इसलिए हमारा जो रेवेन्यू एक्सपेंडिचर था that crossed the R.E. limits given by the Ministry of Finance. So, that was the major reason. As Madam has pointed out, salaries, allowances and pensions are almost 89.3 per cent of our total budget. Now, I come to the surrender in the capital section. As you have very rightly pointed out Sir, the R.E. was Rs. 1580.07 crore and this is the gross expenditure, capital section, and actuals were Rs. 1386.89 crore. As Madam has just mentioned that IT-2, which is one of our flagship projects, is going on in the Department. We are completely overhauling our IT system so that the service delivery to the public becomes very efficient. Now, at the last stage, one tender did not fructify. And that was quite a substantial amount. So, we had to cancel that tender. It is because of that we had to surrender the money at the last moment. This year, we have made our projections accordingly. Perhaps, this year, we will be able to spend according to what we are projecting”.

VI. Central Sector Schemes

27. The Department of Posts implements Five (5) Central Sector Schemes namely:-
- i) **Postal Operations** for enhancing the efficiency and speed of postal services & Marketing;
 - ii) **Human Resource Management** for focussing on training and capacity-building initiatives for employees;
 - iii) **Estates Management** for optimizing the use of postal properties and facilities;
 - iv) **India Post Payments Bank** for providing a range of banking services to the unbanked and under-banked populations; and
 - v) **IT Induction & Modernization 2.0** for integrating advanced IT solutions for better customer service and streamlined processes.

28. According to the Department, all these Schemes were specifically designed to improve postal services and infrastructure across the country and were being implemented through its 23 Postal Circles in all States/UTs and North East States. Details of the allocation of funds for all the 5 Central Sector Schemes for the year 2023-24 and Proposed and BE allocation for the year 2024-25 are as under:-

Rs. in Crore							
Sl. No.	Plan Schemes/ Activities	Proposed BE 2023-24	BE 2023-24	RE 2023-24	Actuals 2023-24	Proposed BE 2024-25	BE 2024-25
1	Postal Operations	217.31	215.64	220.68	197.37	226.00	225.99
2	Human Resource Management	34.00	34.00	37.47	35.74	42.00	42.00
3	Estates Management	119.50	100.00	115.00	117.39	133.50	133.50
4	India Post Payments Bank	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
5	IT Induction and Modernization	1035.00	928.67	1096.19	921.54	748.00	748.02
	TOTAL	1655.81	1528.31	1719.34	1522.05	1399.50	1399.50

29. When asked for reasons for shortfalls in achieving the target during 2023-24, if any, the Department replied as under:-

“As can be seen in the Table, except for Postal Operations and IT Induction and Modernization, the expenditure is in line with BE & RE allocated”.

30. With respect to the Schemes where there had been persistent underutilization of funds during the last five years and the steps taken to ensure better performance of the schemes, the Department replied as under:-

"Financial Year	%Utilization w.r.t. BE	%Utilization w.r.t. RE
2018-19	87.41%	95%
2019-20	72.42%	99%
2020-21	79.76%	105%
2021-22	94.68%	96.0%
2022-23	137.88%	97.9%
2023-24	99.59%	88%(Funds surrendered at FG Stage)

The data on fund utilization over the past five years reveals that there has generally been consistent usage, with the following percentages with respect to Revised Estimates: 95% in 2018-19, 99% in 2019-20, and 105% in 2020-21. In 2021-22, utilization was at 96%, and in 2022-23, it was 97.9%. However, in 2023-24, the funds utilization with respect to Revised Estimates stood at 88% while it was 98.19% with funds at the Final Grants stage”.

31. Dwelling upon the Schemes that had been prioritized for the year 2024-25, the Department submitted as under:-

“In view of the fact that the Department of Posts is giving thrust to IT modernization for the purpose of not only making its operations more efficient but also to enhance customer satisfaction and revenues, almost 53.45 % of the total scheme allocation for FY 24-25 has been earmarked for IT modernization. Next in line is the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) which has enabled the Department to offer DBT and Banking Facilities including AePS, Dakpay and door-step services to both existing as well as new customers. The Postal operations scheme is also being monitored closely for better and efficient delivery of mail, parcels and international articles, and also focusses on increased customer satisfaction. It is expected that these steps will help the Department to increase the revenue.

As noted above, the monitoring mechanism for review of physical and financial targets under schemes has been further strengthened. A well placed mechanism of senior officers’ meeting with programme divisions within the Postal directorate and meeting with various Postal Circle Heads implementing the schemes has been set up. These meetings are being held under chairpersonship of Secretary (Posts). Dashboard meetings at the level of HMoC are also being regularly held”.

(i) POSTAL OPERATIONS

32. Elaborating on the Postal Operations, the Department submitted that Postal Operations was an Umbrella Scheme with the following components:-

- i. Rural Business and Access to Postal Network
- ii. Mail and Parcel Network Optimization
- iii. Marketing Functions of the Department
- iv. Philately Operations
- v. Quality of Service.

33. Detailing the financial allocations and utilizations under Postal Operations, (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the last five years and the BE for the year 2024-25 the Department furnished the following:-

	Rs. In crores					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Proposed BE	907.67	681.94	621.14	366.23	217.31	226.00
Proposed RE	280.05	329.07	252.59	194.90	233.04	NA
BE	265.57	420.10	246.50	249.35	215.64	225.99
RE	70.80	119.97	229.12	173.76	220.68	NA
Actuals	81.87	111.93	150.03	170.63	197.37	NA
%age expenditure w.r.t. RE	116%	93%	65%	98%	89%	NA

34. On being asked about the Schemes that have been prioritized under Postal Operations during 2023-24, the Department replied as under:-

“Recognizing the importance of optimizing its Mail and Parcel Network, the Department of Posts is focussing on enhancing both operational efficiency and customer satisfaction while also aiming to increase revenue. As a result of this, approximately 69.94% of the total allocation for Postal Operations in the fiscal year 2024-25 has been specifically set aside for the Mail Operations Sub-Scheme. This substantial investment underscores the Department's commitment to improving service delivery and adapting to the evolving needs of customers in an increasingly digital age. By prioritizing these enhancements, the Department of Posts aims to streamline its operations, reduce delivery times, and ultimately provide a better experience for its users”.

(ii) IT INDUCTION AND MODERNISATION

35. The details of the financial allocations and utilizations for IT induction and Modernisation (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the last five years and the BE for the year 2024-25 as submitted by the Department are as under:-

(Rs. in Crore)

S. No	Particulars of Scheme/ Activity	Proposed 2023-24	BE 2023-24	RE 2023-24	Actual 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	BE 2024-25
1.	IT Project 1.0		269.96	263.99	227.95	36.67	35.67
2.	IT Project 2.0	833.00	653.02	832.20	704.84	748.00	712.00

36. According to the Department, the Scheme – ‘IT Induction and Modernization Project 2.0’ has been approved by the Cabinet as continuation of IT Project 1.0 for a period of 8 years w.e.f. from 01.04.2022. Details of the targets allotted in the form of allocation of Budget for the year 2023-24 for various activities under the project and funds utilised are given below:-

Scheme - IT Induction and Modernization Project 2.0 (Rs. In Crore)		
Activity	Activity-wise allotment during 2023-24 (Target)	Fund utilised during 2023-24 (Achievement)
Postal & Logistics	59.84	59.83
IT Infra	51.85	51.84
Network	352.86	352.86
Network-NE	73.2	73.19
DC & DR Facility	14.32	14.32
Security	0	0
Field Infra	127.79	126.01
Field Infra-NE	14.84	14.76
EFRM	0	0
SDA	0	0
Governance	13.1	11.98
Common System	0	0
TOTAL	707.81	704.83

37. Continuing on the IT Induction and Modernization Project 2.0, the Department furnished details of targets allotted in the form of allocation of Budget for the year 2024-25 for various activities under the project as under:-

Sl. No.	Activity	Activity-wise allotment during 2024-25 (Target) (In Rs. Cr)
1	Postal & Logistics	61
2	IT Infra	95
3	Network	209.44

4	Network - NE	58.9
5	DC & DR Facility	9
6	Security	57
7	Field Infra	75
8	Field Infra - NE	17
9	EFRM	8
10	SDA	12
11	Governance	42
12	Common System	68
Scheme Total		712.34

Further, provisioning of Cloud environment, strengthening Technology team, Field Infra refresh and e-KYC rollout are some of the activities on priority under the Project during 2024-25.

38. Responding to a query about impediments being encountered in implementing the project, the Department replied as under:-

“As there are several stakeholders involved in the Project such as IPPB, Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology, NIC, BSNL, etc. coordination issues among these stakeholders are encountered sometimes. To resolve these issues, regular interaction among stakeholders is being ensured through various monitoring committees.

39. In response to a related issue about slow speed of ‘Click and Book’ website of the Department of Posts, the Secretary, during evidence submitted as under:-

“There is a serious problem regarding ‘Click and Book’. You are absolutely right. It is embarrassing for us. There are issues in integration with the main system and TCS is not cracking it. That is IT 1.0, the old project. In IT 2.0, this will be completely resolved. There is no question about it. I know we are losing business in the interim. We have TCS on board but we are not able to crack it. It is not also anybody’s fault. This project started from 2012 onwards. Meanwhile, a lot of improvements have happened in the kind of software we have. This is hardwired SAP ERP software and now we have the flexible ones. Now, we are doing in that where the API base is very clean but to integrate the hard one with new things, it becomes very difficult. So, that is our problem. We have not been as nimble as the industry. Now, we want to be as nimble as the industry”.

40. Enumerating further about the measures taken/planned to address the speed/slowing down of India Posts website (Click and Book) as well as about the initiatives taken for generating awareness about doorstep pick up of the Speed Post parcels, the Department replied:-

“Instances of slowness of India Post’s website (Click and Book) were encountered. However, the problem was rectified in co-ordination with CSI Vendor and now the website is working smoothly. Further, under IT 2.0, a revamped India Post Portal is under development by Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology (CEPT) so as to address and overcome such instances in future. To promote Click and Book services, the Department has created social media creatives and videos to raise awareness amongst the common citizens. These creatives and videos were posted across various social media platforms of the Department of Posts, effectively increasing public awareness”.

(iii) HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

41. The following details of the financial allocations and utilizations for Human Resource Management (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the year 2023-24 and the proposed and BE allocations for the year 2024-25 were furnished:-

(Rs in Crore)							
Sl. No.	Particulars of Scheme	Proposed 2023-24	BE 2023-24	RE 2023-24	Actual 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	BE 2024-25
1.	Human Resource Management (HRM) [2021-22 to 2025-26]	34.00	34.00	38.2712	37.4712	42.00	42.00

42. Explaining the importance of the Scheme in a nutshell with its aims and objectives, the Department submitted as under:-

“Regular review meetings were held for monitoring the progress of achievement to ensure that the targets are achieved.

- I. **Training in other Institutes/develop e-Learning module and iGOT:** It is proposed to optimize training activities for enhancing capacity building of the employees of the Department. In view of the urgent growth of e-Commerce business, there is a need to train officials by Management Institutes of repute. The scheme aims at making use of e-learning technologies to cover the training needs of a large number of officials by development of e-learning Modules and hosting it on ‘Dak Karmayogi Portal’, a Learning Management System of the Department.
- II. **Upgrade and expansion of training facilities in training centres / Setting up new Regional Training Centres (RTCs)/Upgradation of Workplace Training Centres (WTCs):** The aim is to strengthen the existing training centre network through upgradation and expansion of training facilities at the Postal Training Centres. The upgrade would involve expansion of equipment and upgrade of facilities in classrooms/ computer labs and replacement of vehicles/bus for trainees.
- III. **Training Centres building projects and upgradation:** The upgradation of hostel facilities for trainees at existing training centres

by creating State-of-the-Art of hostel, mess, kitchen & laundry in training centres.

IV. **Outsourcing of trainers/Faculties, Housekeeping service vendors:** Outsourcing of trainers would be for identified areas such as marketing and sales, soft skills etc. in all levels of training centres. Training for trainers through outsourced agencies/institutions on specialized area will be taken up, as and when required. Adequate funds need to be provided for housekeeping/Security/gardening etc. and such other functions for professional management of training facilities of training centres.

V. **Travel Expenses:** The travel expenses (domestic and foreign) relating to training programmes for all cadres of employees of the Department of Posts at Circles/Postal Training Centres to be covered.

VI. **Minor works/Maintenance:** Adequate funds need to be provided for the maintenance of buildings of Postal Training Centres. Routine annual maintenance (such as whitewashing and minor repairs) would be included under the scheme-based outlay for this activity. This approach would ensure focussed flow of funds for specific purposes through the scheme budget, leading to visible improvements in training institutes”.

43. Regarding physical targets sets and achieved for Human Resource management during 2023-24, the following details were submitted:-

Name of Division	Physical Target	Target fixed during 2023-24	Achieved during 2023-24
Training Division (Human Resource Management)	Nos. of officers/ Officials to be trained	1,10,000	6,37,536 (including online)
	Number of training programmes to be conducted	15000	23727
	Number of WTCs to be upgraded	45 WTCs	56 WTCs
	Number of Postal Training Centres Upgraded	2	7

44. Submitting details of physical targets set for the year 2024-25 and the measures being planned to achieve the targets set under the Scheme ‘Human Resource management’ the Department stated:-

“The physical target for the financial year 2024-25 is to train 1,10,000 officials. This goal is being pursued by allocating specific training targets to various training centres and Circles across the Department, including the Rafi Ahmed Kidwai National Postal Academy (RAKNPA), Postal Training Centres (PTCs), and Regional Training Centres (RTCs). To achieve this target, the Department is leveraging both in-house and online training platforms, including Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS). Additionally, the iGOT Karmayogi portal is being employed for online training in various other programs, reflecting a strategic approach to blend online and in-person training methodology.

Name of Division	Physical Target	Target fixed during 2024-25
Training Division	Nos. of Officers/Officials to be trained	1,10,000
(Human Resource Management)	Number of WTCs to be upgraded	45 WTCS
	Number of Postal Training Centres Upgraded	2

45. Responding to a query on rationalization of human resource, the Secretary, during evidence, submitted as under:-

“Rationalization would not be very big in numbers. But there will be some savings in urban areas because we cannot cut down our network. What actually will happen in rationalization, it will be a rationalization of manpower, redeployment of people, re-training so that each person becomes more productive. यहां प्रोडक्टिविटी का इश्यू है। डाकखानों की संख्या कम करने का अभी सरकार का कोई प्लान नहीं है, पर जहां क्लस्टर है, जैसे कई शहरों में एक साथ है या गैर-जरूरी रूप से संसाधनों की बर्बादी हो रही है और जहां बेकार ऑफिसेज़ हैं, तो वहां अच्छे ऑफिसेज़ दिए जाएंगे और सुविधाएं अच्छी देंगे, यह हमारा इन्टेंट है। So, the work has already started for rationalization. We will be very clear within three or four months. First cut report has come. I think we should be able to rationalize in a clean way within a year. But it is not going to have an immediate impact. The impact will be in longer term when we are doing remapping. We also have a consultant coming in for that”.

46. Regarding Steps being planned to improve the human resource of the Department, it was replied as under:-

“Recruitment to fill up vacant posts is a continuous process and is being done regularly by holding Department Promotion Committee, Departmental Examination and Direct recruitment through Staff Selection Commission and by individual Postal Circles as per the provisions of the relevant Recruitment Rules”.

(iv) ESTATES MANAGEMENT

47. As submitted by the Department, the objective of this scheme is to fulfill the Universal Service Obligation by providing a congenial environment for customer transaction and also provide a good working atmosphere to the employees. The thrust areas for the development of Postal Estates are: -

- 1) To provide functionally useful modern space for Post Office operations.
- 2) To improve the general ambience and aesthetics of postal buildings.

- 3) To provide convenient, modern facilities and amenities to the users of the post like ATM rooms.
- 4) To design buildings in such a manner that they are attractive to the customers resulting in increased footfall and retaining and bringing new customers to the Post Office for transacting business.
- 5) To prevent encroachments on prime land owned by the Department.
- 6) To preserve the heritage buildings owned by the Department.

48. Details of the financial allocations and utilizations under the Scheme Estate Management (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the year 2023-24 and the proposed and BE allocations for the year 2024-25 as submitted by the Department are:-

(Rs. in Crore)							
S. No	Particulars of Scheme/ Activity	Proposed 2023-24	BE 2023-24	RE 2023-24	Actual 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	BE 2024-25
1.	Estates Management Scheme	165.97	100.00	115.00	119.06	151.30	133.50

49. Responding to a query about the gap in fund allocations, if any, and about the steps that are being taken to ensure adequate availability of funds, the Department replied as under:-

“There is no gap between proposed and amount allocated at BE 2024-25. Amount allocated at BE appear sufficient to achieve the present targets. However, the Department requires much higher allocation to improve the look and feel of all the Postal buildings and staff quarters for which a new proposal is being prepared”.

50. According to the Department, the objective of the Estates Management Scheme is to build suitable Postal buildings and allied infrastructure and to restore and renovate the existing old Postal buildings for efficient postal operations with optimal utilization of the assets and to achieve sustainable development goals in the Department of Posts. Elaborating on the details of physical targets set and achieved during 2023-24, the Department submitted as under:-

“Target for construction of 40 small Post Office buildings, 25 Rain Water Harvesting Structures, 50 Ramps & Rails, 59 ladies toilets and 29 feeding rooms were fully achieved. Target for renovation of 40 buildings was achieved. Target for installation of 32 Solar Power packs, and Braille Signage in 500 post offices were fully achieved”.

51. On being asked about the details of physical targets set for the year 2024-25 and the measures being planned to achieve them, the Department replied as under:-

“Physical targets for FY 2024-25 are as under: -	
Activity	Target
Construction of new post office buildings	40
Renovation of postal buildings	40
Construction of Rain Water Harvesting Structures	25
Construction of Ramps & Rails	50
Construction of ladies toilets	35
Construction of feeding rooms	20
Installation of Solar Power Packs	150
Installation of Braille Signage	500

Renovation of existing buildings including staff quarters and construction of new buildings has been prioritized”.

52. Regarding major impediments being encountered in the implementation of the project, the Department submitted as under:-

“The major challenges being encountered in the implementation of the projects include (a) not getting timely approval from Municipal Corporations and other State Government authorities for starting construction, (b) cancellation of tendering process due to single/high bidding, (c) depleting man power strength of Civil Wing due to Group A cadre of the Civil Wing being declared Dying Cadre and consequent stopping of induction of new man power in Civil Wing.

Department actively liaises with Municipal/State Government authorities for getting necessary approvals. Department has also issued instructions to the Circles for getting new buildings constructed with the help of CPWD, if so required, to avoid delay.

53. Elaborating on the plans of the Department with respect to Estates Management, the Secretary, during evidence submitted as under:-

“For Estates Management, it is very correct that we need to monetize our resources that we have. We are not focussing on it. We are just focussing on maintaining the buildings. Now we want to work more. We are already doing renovation. But on the monetization part, we have to look at the local rules. Now we have all the details for every building. We have done a very big exercise in the last couple of months. We know where to target. We have categorized them into A, B, C and D categories. Some have to be demolished as they fall in D category. Category A buildings are okay. They need just normal maintenance. Like that, we have done an analysis. Similar analysis is done for plots also, which ones are to be constructed, etc. We have now sequenced it. We are ready with our plan and we can justify why we want money. We hope that we will do a much better job with buildings. Retrofitting, re-modelling, etc. is a part of it. We have had a

conversation with the NBCC also. We need to have more conversations because they know about how to do the monetization. They have done it for other Government buildings. We need to make sure that we are there for Government Schemes. We are always there. Dak sewa is jan sewa and all that. But we need to make sure that we are not a burden and they do not look for alternatives. We do not afford to have anybody looking for alternatives, including the Government. We realize that it is a business”.

54. When the Committee desired to know about the measures taken to address long delays in identifying Heritage Buildings and restoring them, the representatives of the Department, during evidence, provided the following information:-

“मैडम ने हैरिटेज बिल्डिंग्स का सवाल उठाया था। पब्लिक एकाउंट्स कमेटी ने इस विषय पर बहुत विस्तार से डिस्कशन किया और अब वे हमारी प्रोग्रेस से थोड़े संतुष्ट हुए हैं। हमने स्लाइड में भी दिखाया है। करीब 7 हैरिटेज बिल्डिंग्स और आइडेंटिफाई करने का प्रोसेस चल रहा है। पहले 44 बिल्डिंग्स थीं और अब 51 बिल्डिंग्स होने वाली हैं। इसके लिए समिति का गठन भी हो गया है। The Committee has been formed, and we are actually asking for more funds now for heritage buildings”.

55. Further it was added:-

“हमें 27 करोड़ रुपये का बजट मिला था, the Department on its own has increased the budget. Now, we have diverted the funds and we are spending around Rs. 97 crore on heritage buildings only. महोदय, दिल्ली में दो बिल्डिंग्स हैं और मुम्बई में केवल एक बिल्डिंग जीपीओ है। मुम्बई जीपीओ में इनटेक के सुपरविजन में काम चल रहा है। वहां साईं कंस्ट्रक्शन कम्पनी काम कर रही है। We have a tender of about Rs. 27 crore for Bombay GPO renovation. नई दिल्ली जीपीओ का भी इनटेक के अंडर काम शुरू हो गया है। लखनऊ जीपीओ में भी काम चल रहा है। अभी उत्तर प्रदेश की माननीय राज्यपाल ने करीब 15-20 दिन पहले वहां विजिट किया है। वे वहां गयी थीं। उन्होंने उसको देखा और उन्होंने कुछ सुझाव दिए हैं। उन सजेशंस के लिए हमने अभी उत्तर प्रदेश सर्किल को कुछ एक्स्ट्रा फंड्स भी दिए हैं, जिस पर काम चल रहा है”।

56. Elaborating further on the measures taken to address long delays in identifying Heritage Buildings and restoring them and steps taken on Report (No. 16 of 2023) of CAG regarding conservation policy and trained personnel for Heritage Buildings, the Department submitted:-

“ (i) Pursuant to the Report (No. 16 of 2023) of CAG, Department has framed Conservation Policy for its heritage buildings in November, 2023 having provision for constitution of Circle Heritage Cells at Circle level and Postal Heritage Conservation Committee at national level and guidelines for carrying out restoration works of heritage buildings.

(ii) Circle Heritage Cells at Circle level and Postal Heritage Conservation Committee at national level have been requested to identify and recommend postal buildings for inclusion in the list of heritage buildings of Department. Department has signed MoU with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) for getting expert guidance in restoration of heritage buildings. Detailed provisions to carry out restoration works of heritage buildings have been included in the Conservation policy of the Department.

(iii) CPWD Academy, Ghaziabad has been requested to devise a training module for Civil Wing personnel of the Department to train them in conservation/restoration works of heritage buildings”.

57. On being asked about the initiatives taken/planned to monetize resources and Estates Management along with the hindrances witnessed in doing the same, the Department replied as under:-

“The Department is making optimal use of its buildings for postal purposes and using its vacant land for construction of new postal buildings to reduce its liability for rental expenditure”.

(v) INDIA POST PAYMENTS BANK

58. Under the Scheme ‘India Post Payments Banks’, the details of the financial allocations and utilizations (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the year 2023-24 and the proposed and BE allocations for the year 2024-25 as submitted by the Department are as under:-

(Rs. in Crore)

S. No	Particulars of Scheme/Activity	Proposed 2023-24	BE 2023-24	RE 2023-24	Actual 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	BE 2024- 25
1	India Post Payments Bank	250	250	250	250	250	250

59. When asked to explain the importance of the Scheme ‘India Post Payments Banks’ along with its aims and objectives, the Department replied as under:-

“India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has been setup with the vision to build the most accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man in India leveraging the last mile reach and penetration of the Postal network. IPPB has enabled more than 1.62 lakh Post Offices (including 1.3 lakh in rural areas) to provide banking services at the counters. IPPB has also equipped nearly 1.89 lakh Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks with smart phones and biometric devices to provide door step banking services. IPPB has established an interoperable banking infrastructure for the public good contributing towards changing the financial inclusion landscape in India. IPPB addresses the last mile needs of the banking industry at large to provide door step services to the customer of ANYBANK through the Postmen and Gramin DakSevaks, leading to an increase in rural banking

infrastructure by almost 2.5 times. The Bank has a customer base of 10+ Crore customers, of which 75% are in rural areas and 47% of the customers are women.

Powered by Aadhaar based eKYC this ensures instant account opening with no manual intervention, especially for the rural population who may not possess the required documents prescribed by the banking ecosystem to become part of the formal financial ecosystem.

The IPPB-DoP combine has created a Phygital Platform for Rural India enabled to provide Universal Services that has embedded Financial Services with Govt. Services through collaboration of Government and institutions in banking ecosystem thus providing a multitude of citizen relevant services at the last mile.

The vision of IPPB is to achieve the National objective of Financial Inclusion in a cost effective way and to remove barriers to access basic financial services by the common man especially in the unbanked and under banked areas”.

60. Details of the physical targets set and their achievement under the Scheme during 2023-24 were as under:-

2023-24	Target	Achievement	%Achievement
End user opening at least 1 Account	1,79,373	1,69,822	95%
Account Acquisition	1.37Crore	2.18Crore	159%
CASA Balance	Rs.12,473Crore	Rs.11,536Crore	92%

IPPB has focussed on acquiring customers who are DBT beneficiaries to ensure that the Govt.’s benefits are directly credited to the beneficiary's Bank account. The service delivery of IPPB through the network of Department of Posts has increased the accessibility and affordability to the accounts, and customers can reach out to any Post Office /postman to access their accounts.

61. On being asked as to how many new Post Offices and branches of India Post Payment Bank have been opened in the country during the last three years, the Department replied that India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) was launched on September 1, 2018 with 650 branches. IPPB services are available in 1.62 lakh Post Offices across the country. The IPPB access points opened in last three years are as under:-

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
IPPB Branches/Access points	0	2,423	23,060

62. Details of new Post Offices opened in the country during last three financial years are as under:-

Financial Year	Number of new post offices opened
2021-22	3114
2022-23	0

2023-24	5746
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63. In addition, number of Post Offices opened by relocation/redeployment in last three years is as under:-

Financial Year	Number of new post offices opened
2021-22	150
2022-23	144
2023-24	168

64. The following are the targets set under the Scheme 'India Post Payments Banks' for the year 2024-25:-

2024-25	Target
Revenue generating Access Points	1,30,000
Account Acquisition	2.08 crore
CASA (Current Account Savings Account) Balance	Rs. 16,500 crore

65. When ascertained about impediments being encountered in the implementation of the project , the Department submitted as under:-

“The Department of Posts launched India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) through a nationwide launch on September 1, 2018. India Post Payments Bank(IPPB) has enabled 1.62 lakh Post Offices to provide Banking services and has equipped nearly 1.89 lakh Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks with a smartphone and biometric device to provide door step banking services.

Pricing intervention under MDR and NEFT/RTGS charges and price sensitivity towards doorstep banking charges put strain on the revenue streams of IPPB in the initial years. The Payment Bank business model provides limited avenues for revenue generation. To overcome this, IPPB has identified alternate revenue streams like G2C services to balance the revenue mix. There has been a consistent increase in the Bank's revenue and the Bank turned profitable in the 4th year of its operations”.

66. On being asked about the measures being taken to achieve the targets, the Department replied as under:-

- i. “Incentivization of the end-user to promote increased transaction activity;
- ii. Increased linkage of IPPB and POSA account stop remote acquisition and customer balances;
- iii. Partnerships with Govt. institutions and financial institutions to provide account opening for DBT beneficiaries, G2C service and Loan/Credit referral services”.

VII. PHILATELY OPERATIONS

67. The financial allocations and utilizations for Philately operations (Proposed, BE, RE and Actuals) for the year 2023-24 and the proposed and BE allocations for the year 2024-25 are as under:-

(Rs. in Crore)

S. No	Particulars of Scheme/ Activity	Proposed 2023-24	BE 2023-24	RE 2023-24	Actual 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	BE 2024-25
1.	DhaiAkhar	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37
2.	Sparsh	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55

68. According to the Department, DhaiAkhar is a National Level Letter Writing Competition on a theme/subject decided by Department of Posts for the citizens of India. Participants are to write a letter expressing their views on the subject addressing to the Chief Postmaster General concerned which would be eligible for cash awards if shortlisted first at Circle level and then at Directorate level. It was not only a celebration of the art of letter writing, but also an opportunity for individuals across the country to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas in a meaningful and heartfelt manner. It sought to encourage creativity, originality, and self-expression, and provided a platform for individuals to display their writing skills and talents.

69. Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana was a Scholarship for Promotion of Aptitude & Research in Stamps as a Hobby or SPARSH. These annual scholarships are awarded to those students who have good academic record and also pursue Philately as a hobby for reinforcing the efforts aimed towards increasing the reach of Philately. It is expected that such a scholarship could provide fillip to not only Philately but also project a positive image of DoP and create ambassadors for Philately and DoP.

70. The details of physical targets set and achieved during 2023-24 under these Schemes and reasons for shortfall, if any, were also furnished. They are as under:-

Sl. No.	Name of the activity	Target allotted	Target achieved	Reason
1	Dhai Akhar (Number of participants)	17,80,000	560,000	Less number of students/youth participated in Yr 23-24. Efforts are being made to increase the participation this year. A consultant is also hired to increase the same.
2	SPARSH (number of participants)	42,820	52,000	

3	District level Exhibition	20	20	
4	State level Exhibition	3	3	
5	Release of Special Cover	250	334	
6	Quiz/seminar/workshop	873	1499	
7	Opening of School Philately clubs	342	413	
8	Opening of new PDA accounts	24,145	18,303	The number of Accounts will increase as complete digitization of account is proposed in IT 2.0
9	Activating dormant PDA accounts	10,650	2557	The number of Accounts will increase as complete digitization of account is proposed in IT 2.0
11	Obtaining CMS business	80	62	
12	Foreign Exhibition Participation	2	2	

71. Further, the details of physical targets set for the year 2024-25 under these Schemes are as under:-

SL	Name of the activity	Target allotted	Reason
1	Dhai Akhar	17,80,000	A consultant is hired to increase the participation this year.
2	SPARSH	-	
3	District level Exhibition	31	
4	State level Exhibition	3	
5	Spl. Cover	250	
6	Quiz/seminar/workshop	843	
7	Opening of School Philately clubs	342	
8	Opening of new PDA accounts	24,145	The number of Accounts will increase through targeted activities supported by complete digitization of accounts proposed in IT 2.0
9	Activating dormant PDA accounts	10650	The number of Accounts will increase through targeted activities supported by complete digitization of accounts proposed in IT 2.0
11	Obtaining CMS business	80	
12	Foreign Exhibition Participation	4	

72. Responding to a query regarding delay in convening the first meeting of Philatelic Advisory Committee, the Secretary, during evidence deposited as:-

“About the Philatelic Advisory Committee, actually, we are waiting for two nominations from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. I understand that it is at some late stage of processing. We need two MPs’ names. Then only we can constitute the Committee. Meanwhile, there are urgent stamps, like we wanted to release during Paris Olympics because it is a high value stamp. As you said, revenue is something which is very important. वह हमने निकाला। इस तरह से सुप्रीम कोर्ट के 75वें वर्ष पर निकाला। वह मिनिस्टर ऑफ कम्युनिकेशंस खुद क्लियर करते हैं। लेकिन ज्यादा नहीं कर पाते हैं या कोई बहुत अर्जेंट किसी का कमेमोरेशन हैं, 100 वर्ष हैं, कोई एनिवर्सरी है, कोई बहुत महत्वपूर्ण शख्सियत है, तब होता है। नहीं तो हमारी पूरी लिस्ट रेडी है, जैसी ही पीएसी होगी, हम तुरंत काम शुरू कर देंगे। फाइल मेरी डेक्स पर रखी है, मैं पढ़ रही थी कि क्या-क्या आए हुए हैं। हमारे पास जो सारे सजेशंस आए हैं, प्रोपोनेंट्स के लिस्टेड हैं। If it comes, definitely, we will have a quick meeting and we will do the job”

73. Regarding concerns associated due to lack of holding meetings of Philately Advisory Committee and release of commemorative stamp, the Department submitted:-

“The last meeting of the Philatelic Advisory Committee (PAC) was held on 25.07.2022 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi under the Chairmanship of the then Hon'ble Minister of Communications (MoC) but the term of the PAC ended in February, 2024. Department is underway to conduct the next meeting of the PAC. For the purpose, the Philatelic Advisory Committee has been constituted on 28.10.2024 with the approval of the Hon'ble MoC. To avoid any adverse impact on release of the stamps and generation of revenue due to non-conducting of PAC meeting, the urgent proposals deemed worthy for issue of Commemorative Postage Stamps were processed separately for approval of Hon'ble Minister of Communications. Now a meeting of the newly constituted PAC is being scheduled”.

74. Responding to another query regarding the amount of revenue generated from Philately and on the release of commemorative stamps in absence of Philatelic Advisory Committee, the Secretary, during evidence submitted as under:-

“About revenue, you had mentioned about philately. While I think we have not in India yet exploited philately to that extent, we hope that not only commemorative stamps, we want to do more ancillaries. It sells a lot. इवेंट के अराउंड तो हम बिल्ड कर के थोड़ा बेच लेते हैं, but on a regular basis in the new software we are providing. Already, a plan is underway to expand our Philatelic Museum. We are doing a lot of curating. जो हमारा पुराना सामान है, जो विरासत है, वह भी है तो वह काम भी चल रहा है”।

VIII. Dormant Accounts

75. On being asked about the number of dormant accounts that were with Post Office Savings Bank, the Department provided the following details w.r.t dormant accounts and unclaimed funds:-

Year	No. of dormant/inactive accounts lying with DoP (in Lakh)	Value and Amount deposited in dormant/ inactive accounts lying with DoP (Rs in Cr.)
30.09.2020	124.32	9319.87
30.09.2021	164.26	12124.66
30.09.2022	218.20	16240.20

76. Submitting to the Committee the efforts made by the Post Offices to ensure that the funds are restored to the rightful owners/nominees, the Department stated:-

“In accordance with the instructions contained in SB order No. 8/2019 dated 13.09.2019, all types of unclaimed accounts/certificates in small savings schemes are identified centrally and frozen. Circles then download list of such accounts pertaining to the Post Offices falling under their jurisdiction and shares the same with the concerned Post Offices. The concerned Post Office places the list on the Notice Board meant for public and tries to contact each of the account holder of the unclaimed account by all reasonable means at least two times within a span of sixty days of placing the list on the notice board. Door to door campaign and special drives are carried out at Divisional/Regional/Circle level for settlement of such unclaimed accounts. Periodical monitoring through Video Conferencing is also being done at Directorate level. An amount of ₹ 2,697.04 Cr has been released against 57.73 Lakh accounts in last three financial years”.

77. Clarifying about the number of unclaimed deposits and the ways in which those funds were being spent, the Secretary, during evidence submitted as under:-

“With regard to unclaimed deposits, I would like to say that there is a system, like in banks we have to put the money. It moves automatically into the Senior Citizens Welfare Fund. That is where it goes. Our job is limited to putting it after seven years or after 10 years. There are some provisions in this regard. We put it online so that if anybody comes to claim, the money can come back. Even if it goes to the Senior Citizens Welfare Fund, the process is a little longer, it gets pulled out from there. So right now, the dormant accounts, the silent accounts are 2.18 crore in number. As we are very old in this, a huge number of dormant accounts are with us with a total value of Rs.16,240 crore. I wish to submit that it is not our money. It is that of the Government. Anyway, we are just holding this amount. This money is in the Senior Citizens Welfare Fund and it is for the Finance Ministry to use that money to make schemes for senior citizens”.

78. On being asked about the initiatives taken/planned for reducing the unpaid amount lying in dormant accounts in Post Offices, the Department replied:-

“Proactive measures are being taken by the Department to contact beneficiaries of unclaimed or dormant accounts. In line with instructions in SB order No. 8/2019 dated 13.09.2019, all types of unclaimed accounts and certificates in small savings schemes are centrally identified and frozen. Lists of these accounts, pertaining to Post Offices within each Circle’s jurisdiction, are downloaded by Circles and shared with the respective Post Offices. The list is placed on the public Notice Board by the concerned Post Office, and efforts are made to contact each account holder by all reasonable means at least twice within sixty days of posting the list. Door-to-door campaigns and special drives are conducted at the Divisional, Regional, and Circle levels to facilitate the settlement of these unclaimed accounts. Periodic monitoring is also carried out at the Directorate level.

A major obstacle is the absence of nomination in numerous accounts opened before 18.12.2019. Since 18.12.2019, nomination has been made mandatory for all newly opened accounts, and a system restriction has been implemented to prevent the opening of accounts without a nomination. When account holders of non-nominated accounts visit a Post Office for transactions, they are encouraged by the staff to submit a nomination for their account. The Department is making every possible effort to ensure that no account remains without a nomination”.

IX. NORTH-EAST REGION (NER)

79. According to the Department, financial allocations and utilisation under all the Schemes/projects being implemented in North-East Region for the last five years along with the reasons for the under-utilisation, are as under:-

(Rs. In Crore)					
Year	BE	RE	AE	%w.r.t.BE	%w.r.t.RE
2019-20	87.10	53.94	44.20	50.75%	81.94%
2020-21	122.18	111.62	92.75	75.91%	83.09%
2021-22	105.40	103.70	92.70	87.95%	89.40%
2022-23	105.55	136.89	125.81	119.19%	91.90%
2023-24	127.83	146.93	134.68	105.36%	91.66%
2024-25	114.95	NA	1.96(as on date)	1.71%	NA

80. Further, it was added that:-

“As can be seen in the table above, Department of Posts has been able to achieve more than 90% expenditure Targets with respect to Final Grants for the Last Three Years. DoP aims to completely utilize the NER funds for FY 2024-25”.

81. On being asked about the new initiatives that were planned for NER under various Schemes/projects to be implemented during for the year 2024-25, the Department submitted:-

“As per one of the agenda items of the Interstate Council Secretariat, Department of Posts, has been entrusted to bring all the villages in the country under Brick and Mortar bank branches or post offices within 5 kms. In the North Eastern Region, IPPB services are available through a network of 7064 Branch Post Offices. In order to expand access to banking services to the population of North Eastern Region, it is proposed to open IPPB access points in Branch Post offices in following locations:

State Name	Grand Total
Arunachal Pradesh	50
Manipur	18
Meghalaya	25
Nagaland	15
Grand Total	108

These 108 IPPB touch points in Branch Post offices can be made live before 31st December 2024. This would not only fulfil the budget announcement but would also expand the banking services in North Eastern Region”.

82. Regarding the details of IPPB services available in Assam, Tripura, Sikkim and Mizoram, the Department submitted as under:-

“India Post Payments Bank offers a range of services in Assam, Tripura, Sikkim, and Mizoram, through Postman/GDS personnel equipped with a smartphone and biometric device to provide banking services at customers' doorsteps. The services include:

- i. Paperless & Instant Account Opening;
- ii. Savings Accounts for citizens, including Aadhaar Seeding for Direct Benefit Transfer beneficiaries;
- iii. Virtual Debit Card ;
- iv. Cash Deposit/Cash Withdrawal services;
- v. Domestic Money Transfer services – Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), Unified Payments Interface (UPI);
- vi. Bill Payment services – Payment of utility bills, Direct-to-Home (DTH) and mobile recharges, Equated Monthly Installment (EMI) payments, insurance, etc;
- vii. Insurance Services for IPPB customers – Life, health, vehicle insurance, and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY);

- viii. Post Office Savings Account (POSA) linkage with IPPB accounts;
- ix. Online Payment for Post Office Savings Schemes – Public Provident Fund (PPF); Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY), Recurring Deposit (RD), and Postal Life Insurance (PLI);
- x. Digital Life Certificate (DLC) services – Facilitates submission of DLC for pensioners of Central/State/Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO);
- xi. Aadhaar-Based Services – Mobile number update in Aadhaar for any citizen; and Child Aadhaar Enrolment services (for children under 5 years old)".

83. Elaborating on the special measures taken for various States in the North East, the representatives of the Department, during evidence, submitted as under:-

“Special measures we have taken for various States in the North East because each State is different, each has its own problems. जैसा कि सवाल था कि नॉर्थ-ईस्ट में ग्रामीण डाक सेवा में बाहर के लोग आ रहे हैं, तो हमारे पास वर्ष 1992 तक जो ग्रामीण डाक सेवक थे, उसमें हम लोग लोकल रेसिडेंट्स को ही लेते थे। उसके बाद कोर्ट की एक रूलिंग आई कि आप संविधान के अनुच्छेद – 16(2) के विरुद्ध काम कर रहे हैं because no discrimination can be done when you are giving State jobs on the basis of residence also. Then, there is a residence clause also. वास्तव में, हम भी यह चाहते थे कि इसमें लोकल लोग रहें, लेकिन हम इसे नहीं कर पाए। So, to get over this problem, we added local language to it. हमने यह कर लिया कि आपको दसवीं कक्षा में लोकल लैंग्वेज भी पढ़ी होनी चाहिए, तो उससे यह हुआ कि आंध्र प्रदेश में जिसने तेलुगू पढ़ी है, वही इसमें आ सकता है।

नॉर्थ-ईस्ट के केस में प्रॉब्लम यह हुई कि स्टेट की जो ऑफिशियल लैंग्वेज है, हम उसी को ले सकते हैं। जैसे, नागालैंड की ऑफिशियल लैंग्वेज इंग्लिश है, तो जब हम इंग्लिश भाषा को उसकी क्राइटेरिया बनाते हैं, तो फिर उसमें कोई भी आ सकता है। That is why this problem is coming in the northeast. In the southern States, we do not have this problem. This problem is in States where Hindi/English is the Official language. जहां पर सभी जगह हिन्दी/ इंग्लिश बोली जाती है, तो वहां इधर-उधर के क्षेत्रों से लोग आ जाते हैं।

हमने यह क्राइटेरिया रखा है कि राज्य सरकार ने अपने गजट में जिसे ऑफिशियल लैंग्वेज बनाया है, हमने इसमें लोगों को लेने के लिए उसी लैंग्वेज को अपनाया। जैसे अरुणाचल प्रदेश में भी ऑफिशियल लैंग्वेज हिन्दी और इंग्लिश थी, नागालैंड में इंग्लिश है। मिज़ोरम की ऑफिशियल लैंग्वेज मिज़ो है। इसलिए हमने भी यह कहा कि मिज़ोरम में भर्ती के लिए आपके द्वारा लोकल लैंग्वेज पढ़ी होनी चाहिए।

अगर नागालैंड राज्य में ऑफिशियल लैंग्वेज को चेंज करके वहां की स्थानीय किसी भाषा को डाल दें तो फिर हम भी अपनी क्राइटेरिया में उसी लैंग्वेज को डाल देंगे। Then, it will be

restricted to the locals. इससे हमें भी फायदा है कि इसमें लोकल लोग आएंगे। उन्हें वहां का इलाका पता होता है और इसका फायदा हमें भी मिलेगा”।

84. To this, the Secretary, during evidence further added that:-

“There is a big chart of various languages. They will decide which language is spoken in which district. It is a very complex thing. If something can be done by the Government, we are there to do it. सर, हमने बात की थी। जैसा कि अरुणाचल प्रदेश के बारे में सर जो केस बता रहे हैं, किरेन रिजिजू सर ने हम लोगों को बुलाया था। उस समय वे लॉ मिनिस्ट्री देख रहे थे। इस पर काफी चर्चा हुई, पर उसका कोई रास्ता निकल नहीं रहा था। फाइनली, अरुणाचल प्रदेश ने अपनी ऑफिशियल letter निकाल कर अपनी लैंग्वेज को उसमें डाल दिया। फिर हमें यह गजट मिल गया, तो हमने उसके आधार पर वहां लोकल लैंग्वेज की क्राइटेरिया डाल दी”।

X. MISCELLANEOUS

(i) Awareness generation and advertisements:

85. The Committee during Oral Evidence pointed out that the advertisement and publicity by the Department of Posts for their programmes was laggard. To this, the Secretary, deposed as under:-

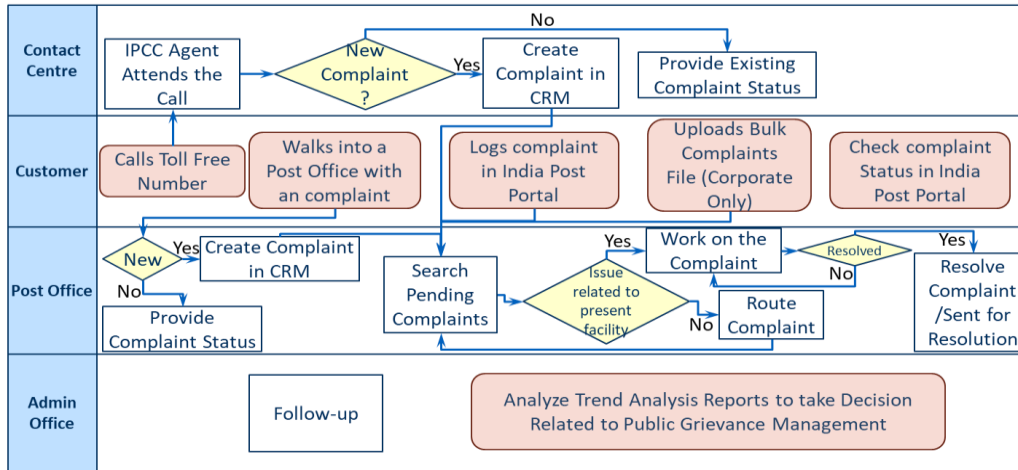
“हमारी जो एडवर्टाइजिंग पब्लिसिटी का बजट वर्ष 2022-23 में 25.77 करोड़ रुपये था और 2024-25 में 51 करोड़ रुपये हुआ है। हम कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि हम ज्यादा एडवर्टाइजिंग कर पाएं। माननीय सदस्यों ने एवेयरनेस के बारे में बात कही है। इसके लिए सोशल मीडिया पर हमने पहले ही जोर बढ़ा दिया है। एक नई एजेंसी एवेयरनेस कैम्पेन में ज्यादा डिटेल से काम करेगी। हमारे मिनिस्टर साहब भी इस पर बहुत फोकस कर रहे हैं। इंस्टाग्राम, फेसबुक, ट्विटर, एक्स पर हमारी सारी प्रेजेंस बढ़ गई है और आगे भी बढ़ाने का हमारा प्लान है। इसके अलावा फिजिकल कैम्पेनिंग में कैम्पस वगैरह बहुत अच्छी तरह से कर रहे हैं। ग्रामीण इलाके में ज्यादा काम हो रहा है और अर्बन एरियाज में भी फोकस करने की जरूरत है क्योंकि अर्बन एरियाज में 10 प्रतिशत डाकखाने तो हैं। जैसा कहा गया कि पोस्ट आफिस सेविंग बैंक्स पर फोकस होना चाहिए”।

86. Regarding steps taken/planned to advertise the Schemes and services provided by the Department of Posts, it was submitted that:-

“Department of Posts has been promoting the products and services of the Department of Posts through outdoor media campaigns, Social media campaigns, etc. Funds are also placed at the disposal of Circles so that promotional activities such as melas and outreach programmes can be organized at the local as well as rural levels. Promotion of all products and services is also being done on the Social Media platforms of the Department at Directorate, Circle and Region levels, which are disseminated and amplified in Hindi, English and regional languages. Department is working in close coordination with Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for timely dissemination of progressive reforms and success stories in media”.

(ii) Grievance Redressal Mechanism

87. Process/Flow Chart of grievance redressal in the Department of Posts as submitted, is as under:-



88. Furnishing details regarding grievances received, resolved and pending during the year 2023-24, as provided by the Department is tabulated below:-

Circle-wise receipt, settled and pending complaints during 2023-24									
Name of Circle	Opening Balance	Received	Total	Settled	Pending	Below 30 days	31 - 90 days	91- 180 days	Above 180 months
Andhra Pradesh	532	16335	16867	16625	242	228	14	0	0
Assam	467	10673	11140	10821	319	308	11	0	0
Bihar	1120	44083	45203	44795	408	394	14	0	0
Chattisgarh	301	11830	12131	11843	288	252	36	0	0
Delhi	23682	99872	123554	120649	2905	2828	77	0	0
Gujarat	1783	86751	88534	86532	2002	1806	160	36	0
Haryana	956	44763	45719	43857	1862	1652	210	0	0
Himachal Pradesh	101	5378	5479	5355	124	117	7	0	0
Jammu & Kashmir	370	9639	10009	9540	469	365	92	12	0
Jharkhand	276	13518	13794	13559	235	213	12	6	4
Karnataka	1898	145134	147032	145468	1564	1450	106	7	1
Kerala	1003	33114	34117	33312	805	708	88	9	0
Madhya Pradesh	741	40088	40829	40022	807	735	69	3	0
Maharashtra	6003	274025	280028	276793	3235	3167	67	1	0
North Eastern	195	20785	20980	20795	185	83	72	30	0
Odisha	428	14886	15314	14963	351	333	17	1	0
Punjab	1019	52629	53648	52158	1490	1345	143	2	0
Rajasthan	1173	62427	63600	61901	1699	1685	14	0	0
Tamilnadu	2001	77769	79770	78619	1151	1088	63	0	0
Telangana	2203	27625	29828	29173	655	603	50	2	0
Uttar Pradesh	6108	186175	192283	189901	2382	2144	229	9	0
Uttarakhand	304	13764	14068	13751	317	273	44	0	0
West Bengal	1502	62747	64249	63226	1023	986	33	3	1
Army Postal Service	96	1875	1971	1893	78	66	12	0	0

Total	54262	1355885	1410147	1385551	24596	22829	1640	121	6
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New SOP has been adopted in September 2023 with clear outcomes. Strict monitoring has been introduced. As a result of efforts made, the complaint resolution time reduced from 16 to 9 days.

PART II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Budget Analysis and Overview of Demands for Grants for 2024-25

1. The Department of Posts (DoP) have laid the Demands for Grants (2024-25) in Lok Sabha on 31st July, 2024 for a total amount of Rs. 38,917.24 crore consisting of Rs. 37,654.64 crore under Revenue Section and Rs. 1,262.60 crore under Capital Section. An analysis of the budgetary allocation made for the previous year (2023-24) indicates that under Revenue Section, the Gross Expenditure set at BE stage was Rs. 39,156.43 crore which was reduced to Rs. 35,416.54 crore at RE stage and the actual expenditure was Rs. 35,645.52 crore. Under the Capital section, during the same period, an amount of Rs. 1,396.95 crore had been allocated at BE stage which was increased to Rs. 1,580.7 crore at RE stage and the actual utilization was Rs. 1,386.89 crore. The Committee note that the Gross Expenditure of the Department in respect of Revenue Section, has shown an increasing trend during the last five financial years that is from Rs. 29,139.74 crore in 2019-20 to Rs. 35,645.52 crore in the year 2023-24. However, there has been a decrease in the BE 2024-25 allotment when compared to the BE 2023-24. The Committee have been informed that this decrease is primarily due to decrease in the allocation for the components of Salaries, Allowances and Pensionary Charges in BE 2024-25 and these three items constitute 89.30% of the Department's expenditure. In Capital section, the Committee observe that the Gross expenditure during 2019-20 was Rs. 730.56 crore and during 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 the same were Rs. 897.41 crore, Rs. 885.55 crore, Rs. 1,476.67 crore and Rs. 1,386.89 crore respectively. The Committee further observe that there has been a decrease in Gross expenditure at BE 2024-25 when compared to 2023-24.

The Committee note that the overall Capital Expenditure of the Department is focussed on several key areas including Mail Operations, Estates Management, India Post Payments Bank, and the IT Induction & Modernization 2.0 initiative. The Committee are pleased to note the fact that during the year 2023-24, over 90% of the allocated funds for these Schemes were utilized, indicating a strong commitment to project implementation. In this regard, the Department have informed that the monitoring mechanism for review of physical and financial targets under Schemes has been strengthened. According to the Department, a well placed mechanism of senior officers meeting with programme divisions within the Postal Directorate and meeting with various Postal Circle Heads implementing the Schemes has been set up. The Committee, while lauding the overall efforts of the Department expect them to continue implementing the

measures being taken to reduce the expenditure and also for effective and timely utilization of budget. The Committee hope that the same trend will continue in coming years also by putting a robust monitoring mechanism for projects.

REVENUE SECTION [Revenue Receipts and Revenue Deficit]

2. The Committee note that the Department is earning revenue through various items/heads which, inter-alia, include (i) Postal Services like Speed Post (Documents), Speed Post(Parcel), International Parcel, Business Parcel, Postage Realised in Cash through Mass Mailing Services, Sale of Postage Stamps, Remotely Managed Franking Machines; (ii) Agency Services like remuneration received from Ministry of Finance for Small Savings Schemes and Cash Certificates; and (iii) Other Citizen Centric services such as Aadhaar enrollment and updation Centres, Passport Seva Kendras and Common Service Centres, etc. The Revenue Receipts during 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 were Rs. 13,558.20 crore, Rs. 10,632.50 crore, Rs. 10,860.80 crore, Rs. 10,917.89 crore and Rs. 11,321.35 crore respectively. Further, the Revenue Receipts has reduced drastically when compared to 2019-20. However, it is heartening to note that during the year 2023-24, the Department achieved revenue of Rs. 11,321.22 Crore against target of Rs. 11,408.04 Crore, which is more than 99% of the target. In addition, for the year 2024-25, the Department has set targets for Rs. 12238.77 crore at BE stage.

During the last five financial years the Revenue Deficit has shown an increasing trend from Rs. 14,813.14 crore in 2019-20 to Rs. 24,115.87 crore in 2023-24. The items/heads on which the Department has incurred maximum expenditure are salaries, allowances and pension which are committed liabilities of the Government. Pension, salary and allowances constitute 33.35 %, 24.02% and 32.01% of the total revenue expenditure respectively. The remaining 11 % expenditure is related to recurring establishment costs.

The Committee note that several measures are being taken to increase the revenue receipts and reduce revenue deficit during 2024-25, which *inter-alia* include (i) Usage of around 1.8 lakh mobile phones by delivery staff for real time updation of delivery status of Speed Post, Registered Post, Money Orders etc. through postman mobile app; (ii) Introduction of Application Programme Interface (API) Integration facility; (iii) Regular monitoring of articles through a well-defined set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at HQ as well as Circle/Division levels; (iv) Introduction of Corporate Customer Specific MIS; (v) 24x7 CRM for bulk customers to upload complaints in bulk and monitor the status on CRM; (vi) Single Point of Contact for corporate customers having monthly business of

Rs.10 lakh and above in all the Postal Circles; (vii) Revision of Registration process of bulk customer under Book Now Pay Later (BNPL) and National Account Facility (NAF) with DoP; (viii) Strengthening the marketing of the Speed Post/Registered letter; (ix) New age booking avenues such as Booking Kiosks and online booking of postal articles to attract new customers; (x) Revamped franchisee scheme with the revised commission structure to increase the revenue of various postal products including Speed post and Registered post; etc.

The Committee expect that the above-mentioned measures by the Department would not only increase the revenue receipts but would also reduce the revenue deficit. The Committee, therefore, urge the Department to continue exploring ways to utilize their vast network and resources for revenue generation and also to regularly monitor their expenditure to control the revenue expenditure gap. In addition to the above, the Committee also desire that an impact assessment of the initiatives being taken may be done periodically to gauge their outcome and take suitable corrective steps to improve further as and when required. The Committee may be kept apprised about the quantifiable outcome of the initiatives taken during the year 2024-25.

CAPITAL SECTION

3. Under Capital section, the Gross expenditure during 2019-20 was Rs. 730.56 crore and during 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 the same were Rs. 897.41 crore, Rs. 885.55 crore, Rs. 1,476.67 crore and Rs. 1,386.89 crore respectively. The Committee note the Department's plan for reducing their expenses which, *inter-alia*, include (i) To study the network of all Post Offices for understanding their need/requirement and rationalize/merge the Post Offices, if needed; (ii) To shift towards usage of Solar Energy, which after initial capital expenditure will reduce the expenses; (iii) Mapping of each person through software to know whether the office is profit centric or not; and (iv) To ensure productivity of every individual. The Committee opine that these initiatives, if enforced in right earnest, would invariably bear tangible results in the direction of reducing expenses of the Department. However, the Department should also ensure that while taking measures to reduce expenses they do not wean off from their envisaged social responsibility of serving the common man. The Committee would like to be apprised about the status in this regard.

CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEMES

IT Induction and Modernization

4. The Committee note that the Department of Posts is placing thrust on IT modernization for the purpose of not only making its operations more efficient but also to enhance customer satisfaction and revenues. Nearly 53.45 % of the total scheme allocation for the financial year 2024-25 has been earmarked for IT modernization. According to the Department, the Scheme – ‘IT Induction and Modernization Project 2.0’ has been approved by the Cabinet as continuation of IT Project 1.0 for a period of 8 years w.e.f. from 01.04.2022. With respect to the budgetary allocations, for the year 2023-24, the fund allocation at BE stage and RE stage were Rs. 653.02 crore and Rs. 832.20 crore respectively whereas the actual expenditure was Rs. 704.84 crore. For the year 2024-25, as against the proposed amount of Rs. 748.00 crore, the allocated sum is Rs. 712.00 crore. With respect to impediments being encountered in implementing the project, the Department have informed that as there are several stakeholders involved in the Project such as IPPB, Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology, NIC, BSNL, etc., the coordination issues among these stakeholders are encountered sometimes. The Department have also informed that in order to resolve these issues, regular interaction among stakeholders is being ensured through various monitoring Committees. While admitting that there is a serious problem regarding slowing down of speed in ‘click and book’ website resulting in loss of business in the interim, the Department enlightened the Committee that the problem was rectified in coordination with CSI vendor and now the website is working smoothly. The Department further apprised the Committee that, under IT 2.0, a revamped India Post Portal is being developed by Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology (CEPT) to overcome such instances in future.

Considering the fact that IT modernization is very vital and integral part of every business plan of the Department of Posts and the implementation of IT Modernization project in all Post Offices will enhance the quality of services and productivity, the Committee urge the Department to ensure proper implementation of IT Induction and Modernization Project 2.0. The Committee desire that the Department should aim at providing new and better services par with global industry standards through IT induction and networking of all Post Offices using client server system managed by technically sound and qualified personnel. The Committee would also like to emphasise that the works undertaken in this regard may be completed as envisaged and in a time bound manner so that the customers will get better, reliable and speedy services.

Human Resources Management

5. As far as the financial allocations and utilizations for Human Resource Management is concerned, the Committee note that during the year 2023-24, the fund allocation at BE stage and RE stage were Rs. 34.00 crore and Rs. 38.27 crore respectively whereas the actual expenditure was Rs. 37.47 crore. For the year 2024-25, the proposed amount of Rs. 42.00 crore has been allocated. The Committee note that the main aims and objectives of this Scheme are (i) Training in other Institutes/develop e-Learning module and employing iGOT Karmyogi portal for online training in various other programmes; (ii) Upgrade and expand training facilities in Training Centres; / Setting up new Regional Training Centres (RTCs)/Upgradation of Workplace Training Centres (WTCs); (iii) Training Centres building projects and its Upgradation; (iv) Outsourcing of trainers/Faculties, Housekeeping service vendors etc; (v) Travel Expenses to be covered; and (vi) Adequate funds need to be provided for the maintenance of buildings of Postal Training Centres. During the year 2023-24, as against the target of training 1,10,000 officers/ Officials, 6,37,536 (including online) were trained. The Committee observe that as against the target of 15,000 training programmes to be conducted, 23727 were conducted by the Department. The Committee further note that the physical target for the financial year 2024-25 is to train 1,10,000 officials. The Committee were apprised that the "Dak Karmayogi" portal is being utilized for online training within the domain of the Department of Posts, catering to the training needs of officials which is indeed heartening.

In order to cater to the growing business of Department of Posts, there is an urgent need to train officials in large number. The Committee are in sync with the Department about the need for rationalization of manpower by redeployment and re-training of people so as to make them more productive. The Department also submitted that they would be able to rationalize manpower within a year though the impact will not be immediate. The Committee feel that since IT modernization is an important thrust area of the Department, the focus should be laid in getting the staff trained from reputed IT related Institutes so as to equip them with latest technology which will enable them to use IT tools in the day-to-day operations. The Committee desire that the selection of personnel for IT trainings should be done from all verticals and would like to be updated of the details of steps taken in rationalization of man power along with laid down criteria for selection of personnel for training and its outcome.

Estates Management

6. While examining the issue, the Committee noted that the key objective of the Estates Management Scheme is to fulfill the Universal Service Obligation by providing a congenial environment for customer transaction and also provide a good working atmosphere to the employees. The thrust areas for the development of Postal Estates include (i) To provide functionally useful modern space for Post Office operations; (ii) To improve the general ambience and aesthetics of postal buildings; (iii) To provide convenient, modern facilities and amenities to the users like ATM rooms; (iv) To design buildings in such a manner that they are attractive to the customers resulting in increased footfall and retaining and attracting new customers to the Post Office for transacting business; (v) To prevent encroachments on prime land owned by the Department; and (vi) To preserve the heritage buildings owned by the Department. With respect to the budgetary allocations, the Committee note that during the year 2023-24, the fund allocation at BE stage and RE stage were Rs. 100 crore and Rs. 115.00 crore respectively whereas the actual was Rs. 119.06 crore. For the year 2024-25, as against the proposed amount of Rs. 151.30 crore, the allocated sum is Rs. 133.50 crore. As far as the physical targets set during 2023-24 is concerned, the Committee note that the target for construction of 40 small Post Office buildings, 25 Rain Water Harvesting Structures, 50 Ramps & Rails, 59 ladies toilets and 29 feeding rooms were fully achieved. In addition, the target for renovation of 40 buildings and for installation of 32 Solar Power packs and Braille Signage in 500 post offices were fully achieved. Taking into consideration the performance of the Department in 2023-24, the Committee are hopeful and expect the Department to achieve the targets set for the year 2024-25. Further, the Committee observed that the major challenges being encountered in the implementation of the projects were (a) not getting timely approval from Municipal Corporations and other State Government authorities for starting construction; (b) cancellation of tendering process due to single/high bidding; and (c) depleting man power strength of Civil Wing due to Group A cadre of the Civil Wing being declared Dying Cadre and consequent stopping of induction of new man power in Civil Wing. To overcome these hurdles, the Committee recommend that earnest efforts may be made to get timely approval from Municipal Corporations and other State Government authorities. With respect to cancellation of tendering process due to single/high bidding the Committee suggest that the Department should revisit the terms and conditions of the

tendering document with special focus on cost benefit analysis. So far as other challenges being encountered in implementing the projects, the Committee recommend the Department to take up the issue with appropriate authorities at the highest level and try to reach its early and logical conclusions.

Heritage Buildings

7. On the issues pertaining to the Heritage Buildings, the Committee desired to know about the measures taken to address long delays in identifying and listing Heritage Buildings, restoring them and steps taken for its conservation. To this, the Department have informed that pursuant to the Report (No. 16 of 2023) of CAG, they have framed Conservation Policy for its heritage buildings in November, 2023 with provision for constitution of Circle Heritage Cells at Circle level and Postal Heritage Conservation Committee at National level and guidelines for carrying out restoration works of heritage buildings. The Circle Heritage Cells at Circle level and Postal Heritage Conservation Committee at National level are to identify and recommend postal buildings for inclusion in the list of Heritage Buildings of Department. The Department has signed MoU with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) for getting expert guidance in restoration of Heritage Buildings. Further, detailed provisions to carry out restoration works of heritage buildings have been incorporated in the Conservation policy of the Department. The Department also informed that CPWD Academy, Ghaziabad has been requested to devise a training module for Civil Wing personnel of the Department to train them in conservation/restoration works of heritage buildings. These steps have necessitated the Department to seek more funds for Heritage Buildings for remodeling/retrofitting so as to preserve them. The Committee would like the Department to take up the need for additional funds in right earnest with the Ministry of Finance. The Committee desire to be apprised of the outcome of the action taken in pursuant to the Conservation Policy for Heritage Buildings.

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)

8. The Department has set up India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) with a vision to build the most accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man in India, leveraging the last mile reach and penetration of the Postal network. As per the budgetary allocations, for this Scheme, the BE for 2023-24 was Rs. 250 crore and the RE was same as the BE i.e. Rs. 250 crore. For the year 2024-25 also, the BE is Rs. 250 crore. The Committee note that IPPB has 650 branches/controlling offices, almost one in each district in the country. Besides, it has enabled 1.62 lakh Post Offices (including 1.30 lakh in rural areas) to provide Banking services at its counters. IPPB has also equipped nearly 1.89 lakh Postmen and Gramin Dak

Sevaks with smartphone and biometric devices to provide Doorstep Banking Services. With respect to the impediments being encountered in the implementation of this project, the Department have informed that Pricing intervention under MDR and NEFT/RTGS charges and price sensitivity towards doorstep banking charges put strain on the revenue streams of IPPB in the initial years. Further, the Payment Bank business model provides limited avenues for revenue generation. The Committee appreciate the fact that to overcome this, IPPB has identified alternate revenue streams like G2C services. The Department have also informed that there has been a consistent increase in the Bank's revenue and the Bank turned profitable in the 4th year of its operations.

The Department has also informed that one of the prioritized Schemes for the year 2024-25 is India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) which has enabled the Department to offer DBT and Banking Facilities including AePS, Dakpay and door-step services to both existing as well as new customers. While examining the subject 'Digital payment and online security measures for data protection', the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2023-24), in their 54th Report had pointed out that the cases of frauds using AePS were on the rise. To this, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had submitted that biometric cloning was by way of using dummy fingers or rubber fingers to withdraw money through the AePS system and they had assured that they were working with Aadhaar and NPCI to put an end to this and they hoped that there would be reduction in future (Rec. No. 4). The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in their Action Taken Note, informed that blocking of Biometric devices by UIDAI and NPCI was carried out actively and major banks have already disabled AePS set as "off". They also informed that analysis of complaints reported on NCRP shows that AePS frauds have reduced from around 5,500 (Oct 2023) to around 2,180 per month (March 2024). While noting the submission of the MHA and MeitY w.r.t to AePS issue in the 54th Report and the fact that major banks have already disabled AePS set as "off", the Committee recommend the Department of Posts to work on foolproof system so as to protect the gullible and vulnerable citizens of rural areas especially because the vision of IPPB is to remove barriers to access basic financial services in the unbanked/under banked areas. The Committee also recommend that regular monitoring of IPPB may be done with a proper feedback mechanism from public regarding performance of the Branches for further improvement in its services.

Philately Operations

9. The Committee note that under Philately operations there are various activities which, inter-alia, include DhaiAkhar, Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana, District level Exhibition, State level Exhibition, Release of Special Cover, Quiz/seminar/workshop, Opening of School Philately clubs, Opening of new PDA accounts, Activating dormant PDA account, Obtaining CMS business and Foreign Exhibition Participation. DhaiAkhar is a National Level Letter Writing Competition and Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana is a Scholarship for Promotion of Aptitude & Research in Stamps as a Hobby or SPARSH. The financial allocations and utilizations in the year 2023-24, reflects that there has been 100 percent fund utilization under both the activities (DhaiAkhar and SPARSH). However, the physical targets are falling short. Under DhaiAkhar for the year 2023-24, the target allotted was 17,80,000 whereas the target achieved was 5,60,000. The shortfall, according to the Department was due to less number of students/youth participating during 2023-24. They also stated that efforts are being made to increase the participation this year and a Consultant has also been hired specially for this purpose. Under SPARSH, for the year 2023-24, the target allotted was 42820 whereas the target achieved was 52000.

The Committee call upon the Department to achieve the targets set under DhaiAkhar for the year 2024-25, which is 17,80,000 and apprise the reasons for not setting any target under SPARSH for the year 2024-25. On a related aspect, with respect to revenue generation from philately, the Committee learnt that in India it is yet to be exploited. In this regard, the Committee urge the Department to explore the possibilities for generating revenue and apprise them about the same. On the concerns raised about not conducting any meeting of the Philatelic Advisory Committee, the Department informed that the last meeting of the Philatelic Advisory Committee (PAC) was held on 25.07.2022 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi but the term of the PAC ended in February, 2024. The Department are in the process of conducting the next meeting of the PAC as it has been constituted on 28.10.2024. Further, it is seen that in order to avoid any adverse impact on release of the stamps and generation of revenue due to non-conducting of PAC meeting, the urgent proposals deemed worthy for issue of Commemorative Postage Stamps have been processed separately for approval of Hon'ble Minister of Communications. Now that Philatelic Advisory Committee(PAC) has been constituted, the Committee recommend the Department to ensure that the meetings of Philatelic Advisory Committee are held periodically. The Committee would also like the Department to be proactive so

that philately is not only promoted amongst students/youth through various exhibitions/motivational programmes but also to ensure that it provides a good opportunity to generate revenue for the Department. To this end, the Committee desire that the Department should make earnest efforts to popularize and make public aware about Philately Bureau, National Philately Museum and Philatelic Deposit Accounts. Action taken in this regard may be submitted to the Committee at the earliest.

Dormant Accounts

10. According to the Department, as on 30.09.2022, there are 218.20 Lakh dormant/inactive accounts lying with DoP and the value and amount deposited in these dormant/inactive accounts for the same period is Rs. 16,240.20 Crore. When inquired about the efforts made by the Post Offices to ensure that the funds are restored to the rightful owners/nominees, the Department have informed that in accordance with the instructions contained in Saving Bank (SB) order No. 8/2019 dated 13.09.2019, all types of unclaimed accounts/certificates in small savings schemes are identified centrally and frozen. Postal Circles then download list of such accounts pertaining to the Post Offices falling under their jurisdiction and share the same with the concerned Post Offices. The concerned Post Office places the list on the Notice Board meant for public and tries to contact each of the account holder of the unclaimed account by all reasonable means at least two times within a span of sixty days of placing the list on the notice board. Door-to-door campaign and special drives are carried out at Divisional/Regional/Circle levels for settlement of such unclaimed accounts and periodical monitoring through Video Conferencing is also being done at Directorate levels. The Committee note that an amount of ₹ 2,697.04 crore has been released against 57.73 Lakh accounts during last three financial years. Clarifying further, about the number of unclaimed deposits and the ways in which those funds were being spent, the Secretary, during evidence, informed the Committee that there exists a system, like in banks, where the money moves automatically into the Senior Citizens Welfare Fund and it is for the Finance Ministry to use that money to formulate schemes for senior citizens, which is the case for all banks. The Department has also stated that whenever there is a request, it is followed up and money is pulled back. Further, with respect to the initiatives taken/planned for reducing the unpaid amount lying in dormant accounts in Post Offices, the Department have informed that proactive measures are being taken by them to contact beneficiaries of unclaimed or dormant accounts. Appreciating the efforts undertaken by the Department in settlement of dormant accounts, the Committee urge the Department to continue their efforts

with renewed vigour to find the legal heirs of the deceased persons. The Department may also explore the possibility to trace out legal heirs through publicity in media and settle the dormant accounts/unclaimed accounts while taking abundant precautions about false claims in the matter. The progress made in this regard be apprised to the Committee at the earliest.

North Eastern Region (NER)

11. An analysis of the financial allocations and utilisation under all the Schemes/projects being implemented in North-East Region reflect that the percentage of utilization w.r.t RE during 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 were 81.94%, 83.09%, 89.40%, 91.90% and 91.66% respectively. It is seen that the percentage of utilization of funds has increased during last five years and Department of Posts has been able to achieve more than 90% expenditure for last two years. The Committee note that in the North Eastern Region, IPPB services are available through a network of 7064 Branch Post Offices. In order to expand access to banking services to the population of North Eastern Region, Department intends to open 108 IPPB access points in Branch Post offices in Arunachal Pradesh (50), Manipur (18), Meghalaya (25) and Nagaland (15) and these would be made live before 31st December 2024.

Responding to a specific concern of the Committee that candidates from other Hindi/English speaking State(s) join as Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDSs) in State where Hindi/English is accepted as official language in the North-East, the Department dealt in detail about the criteria adopted by them for recruiting GDSs. The Committee have been enlightened that in order to resolve the issue the Department prescribed that candidate seeking GDS appointment should possess knowledge of 'Hindi or English' and 'any one local dialects' notified as third language by the respective State Government. However, it has been observed that States which have their official language as 'English' face the issue of having GDS who are not localites. In order to overcome this lacunae, the Committee would like the Department to take up the matter with the concerned State Government(s) to find ways and means to circumvent this issue and arrive at a practical solution at the earliest while adhering to the constitutional provisions.

Awareness generation and advertisements

12. During examination of Demands for Grants (2024-25), it was observed by the Committee that the focus of Department of Posts on advertisement and publicity of their programme was not adequate. To this, the Department of Posts informed the Committee that their advertising/publicity budget during the year 2023-24 was Rs 25.77 crore and for the year 2024-25 it is Rs. 51 crore as they are

going in for wider publicity and have increased their focus on social media. Further, a new agency is being engaged which will work in more detail in the awareness campaign to increase it further. The Department also stated that apart from this, physical campaigns are being done in rural areas and there is a need to focus on urban areas as 10 percent of the Post Offices are in urban areas. While taking note of all futuristic plans of the Department, the Committee urge them to invariably expand their reach through advertisement and publicity campaigns both in Urban and Rural areas and make use of latest technologies to attract the masses. The Department may make periodic assessment of the impact of work done by the new agency engaged by them for awareness and publicity campaigns. The Committee also desire to be kept apprised of all the initiatives taken during 2024-25 along with the outcome of the same.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

13. The Committee note that the total number of grievances with the Department of Posts during the year 2023-24 stood at 14,10,147 which included 54,262 complaints from previous years and 13,55,885 received during 2023-24. It has been observed that out of these, 13,85,551 cases have been settled and 24,596 remained pending. The Department have informed that a new SOP has been adopted in September 2023 with clear outcomes and strict monitoring has been introduced. As a result of efforts made, the complaint resolution time has been reduced from 16 to 9 days. However, it could be gathered from the data given by the Department that there are a few States like Jharkhand, Karnataka, West Bengal Circles, where the time given to resolve some cases is beyond 180 days. While noting the delay in resolving some cases in States like Jharkhand, Karnataka and West Bengal, the Committee recommend that the Department should have a strict monitoring mechanism for redressal of grievances. The Department should also fix responsibility in cases where there is an inordinate delay in redressal of grievances caused by deliberate actions of the staff. The Committee may be apprised of the action taken for reducing the number of grievances pending with the Department of Posts. The Committee would also like to be enlightened about the effectiveness of the SOP that has been introduced.

New Delhi;
16 December, 2024
25 Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

NISHIKANT DUBEY,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Communications and Information Technology.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (2024-25)**

MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 16th October, 2024 from 1230 hours to 1345 hours in Committee Room No. '62', Samvidhan Sadhan, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Nishikant Dubey - Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
3. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
4. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
5. Shri G. Kumar Naik
6. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
7. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
8. Shri Devesh Shakya
9. Shri Rajesh Verma

Rajya Sabha

10. Shri Saket Gokhale
11. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
12. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
13. Shri S. Niranjana Reddy
14. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
15. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

Secretariat

1. Smt. A. Jyothirmayi - Director
2. Shri Rajesh Mohan - Deputy Secretary

LIST OF WITNESSES

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS (MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS)

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Ms. Vandita Kaul	Secretary
2.	Shri Sanjay Sharan	DG (Postal Services)
3.	Shri Partha S. Das	AS&FA
4.	Ms. Manju Pandey	Member (Personnel)
5.	Ms. Manju Kumar	Member (Operations)
6.	Shri Harpreet Singh	CGM (Parcel)
7.	Ms. Sharon Shefali Gupta	DDG (Budget & Accounts)
8.	Shri M U Abdali	DDG (Estates)
9.	Shri Nirmaljit Singh	GM (PLI)
10.	Ms. Veena Kumari D	DDG (Technology)
11.	Dr. Sachin Mittal	DDG (Corporate Planning)
12.	Shri Rajul Bhatt	DDG (FS)

(After the witnesses were called in)

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Secretary, Department of Posts and other officials accompanying her to the Sitting of the Committee convened to examine Demands for Grants (2024-25) relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts). Thereafter, the Chairperson asked the Secretary about the broad parameters for budgetary allocations along with the priorities set for the year 2024-25. He, then, desired to know about the progress made in the five Central Sector Schemes and the initiatives taken to reduce the deficit during the current fiscal year.

3. (Subsequently), the representatives of the Department of Posts (DoP) then made a power point presentation providing overview and spectrum of functions of the Department and highlighted their key businesses and initiatives which *inter-alia* included (i) Postal services (ii) Government services; (iii) Banking and Money Transfer services; (iv) India Post Payments Bank; (v) Insurance services; (vi) Pension Services; (vii) Citizen Centric Services; (viii) Dak Chaupals; (ix) Philately; (x) Personnel Reforms; (xi) Capacity Building; (xii) Estate Managements etc. The Secretary also expounded on their financial performance; Central Sector Schemes; activities/campaigns that were being carried out and planned to increase Revenue Receipts etc.

4. Thereafter, the Members sought clarifications on various issues which *inter-alia* included (i) steps taken to advertise the services of the Department of Posts; (ii) initiatives to attract more customers in Post Office Savings Schemes; (iii) issues relating to Heritage Buildings; (iv) unpaid amounts lying in dormant accounts in Post Offices; (v) retrofitting/ remodeling of the Post Offices (vi) Issues related to advertisements/employment of local people in Post offices of Northeastern region; (vii) Philately Advisory Committee/commemorative stamps; (viii) Speed of India Posts website (Click and Book) and doorstep pick-up of the speed post parcels; (ix) non-functional Dak Niryat Kendras; (x) Small Saving Agents and rural talents; (xi) Initiatives to increase the number of accounts in Post Offices; (xii) E-commerce platforms and tie-ups with private players; (xiii) Monetization of resources and Estate Management; (xiv) Rationalization of manpower, redeployment of people; etc.

5. The representatives of Department of Posts responded to most of the queries raised by the Members. The Chairperson, then, directed that written replies to points on which information were not readily available may be furnished to the Committee within ten days.

6. Thereafter, the Chairperson thanked the representatives of DoP for deposing before the Committee.

The witnesses then withdrew.

A copy of verbatim record of the proceedings was kept on record.

The Committee, then, adjourned.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(2024-25)

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Monday, the 16 December, 2024 from 1015 hours to 1045 hours in Committee Room No. 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY- Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
3. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
4. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
5. Shri G. Kumar Naik
6. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
7. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
8. Shri Devesh Shakya
9. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma

Rajya Sabha

10. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
11. Dr. Sasmit Patra
12. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
13. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
14. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|------------------|
| 2. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 3. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | - | Director |
| 4. | Shri Rajesh Mohan | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee convened to consider and adopt one draft Action Taken Report on Fifty-Seventh Report (17th Lok Sabha) relating to the Department of Posts and four draft Reports on Demands for Grants (2024-25) relating to the Ministries/Department under the jurisdiction of Committee.

3. The Committee, then, took up the following five draft Reports for consideration and adoption:-

(i) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

(ii) Draft Report on Demand for Grants (2024-25) relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

(iii) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

(iv) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

(v) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

4. The Committee adopted the Reports without modifications.

5. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the draft Action Taken Reports and present the same to the House during the current Session of Parliament.

6. XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

The Committee, then, adjourned.

XXXX....XXXX Matter not related to the Report.
